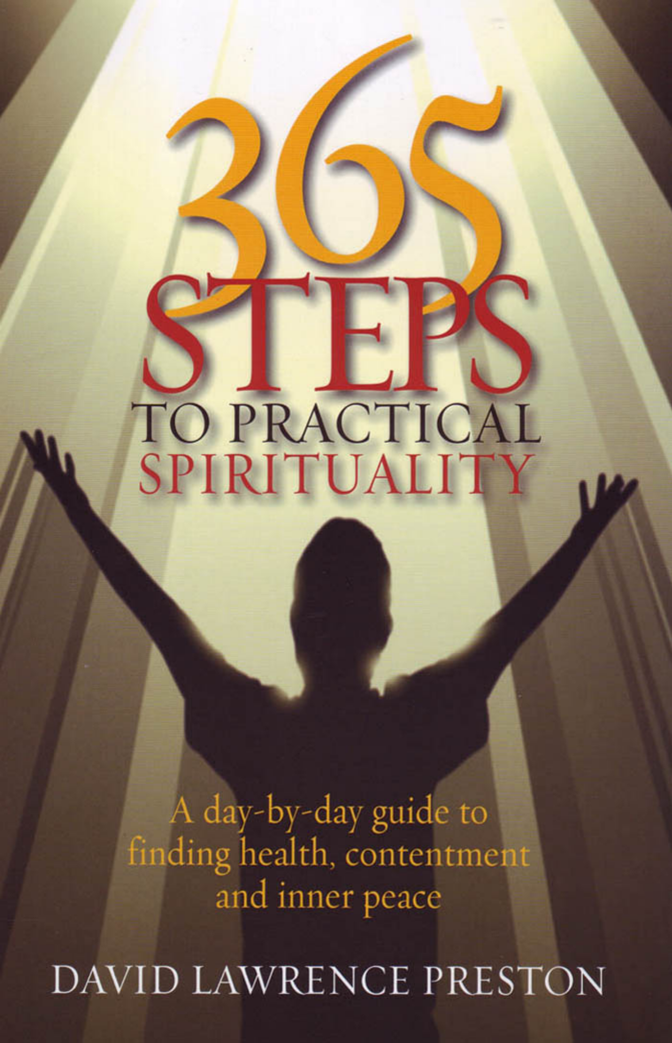

365
STEPS
TO PRACTICAL
SPIRITUALITY
A day-by-day guide to
finding health, contentment
and inner peace
DAVID LAWRENCE PRESTON

365 Steps to Practical Spirituality

By the same author

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Contents

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This book is dedicated to Carmen Lucia de Lara, a woman of immense courage and wisdom, Svaraj Ruth Schmidt whose friendship and inspiration have been a blessing for most of my adult life, and everyone else who has ever taught me anything of value.

Thank you

Grateful thanks to Judith Barton for reading through my manuscript and offering many helpful suggestions.

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1 Your first steps to practical spirituality

A creative intelligence flows through the universe which holds the key to living to your potential. You can feel it pulsating in every part of your being. Like the Sun, it constantly emits energy, and you can light up yourself and the world around you when you are plugged in and switched on. You are charged with spiritual energy which needs only to be released for you to create the kind of life you want to lead.

'Spiritual' means 'non-physical'. Our ideas, intelligence, imagination, sense of humour, kindness, creativity and so on – all the qualities that make us who we are – are non-physical. We seek happiness, love, friendship and peace, and all of these are non-physical too. Our spirituality creates our world, because our lives are simply a reflection of whatever we hold in our minds.

'Spirituality' also relates to the meaning of life in all its splendour. Have you ever wondered who you are, why you're here and where it leads? The only thing we know for sure is that we were born and one day we're going to die. But do our lives matter? How do we fit into the overall scheme of things? Many philosophers have offered their views down the ages, each shedding a little light on the subject. We can learn from them all. My aim is to share some ideas that I have found to be helpful. Use those which appeal to you; the time may come when you are drawn to the others too. The Buddha offered the best advice over two thousand years ago:

> *Friends, do not be hasty to believe a thing even if everyone repeats it, or even if it is written in holy scripture or spoken by a revered teacher. Accept only those things which accord with your own*

> *reason, things which the wise and virtuous support, and which in practice bring benefit and happiness.*

How will you find out if an idea brings benefit and happiness? By applying it! *Reading* can take you only so far. *Doing* reaps incredible rewards.

Everything we need to build a happy and fulfilling experience for ourselves and become a force for good in the world already lies within us. Use it to create the kind of world you want for yourself, one filled with peace, health, prosperity and happiness for all. No words can express how you feel once you have awakened the infinite power of Spirit within and experienced the freedom it brings. To quote Paramahansa Yogananda, a twentieth-century spiritual teacher, 'You realise that all along there was something tremendous within you, and you did not know it.'

> *We have within ourselves a great reservoir of wisdom, strength and peace waiting to be recognised and released. Once we are strong within ourselves, we find that outer circumstances begin to mirror the inner, and life starts to change for the better.*
>
> *Ron Eager*

1 Spirituality Goes Beyond Appearances

Definitions of 'spirituality' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* run to several pages. This is largely because the word 'spirit' has many meanings. These include a sense of loyalty or cohesion ('team spirit'), an emotional state ('in high spirits'), a deeper sense of meaning ('the spirit of the law'), certain chemicals ('white spirit') and, of course, strong alcoholic beverages ('spirits').

There are many interpretations of spirituality, and they all relate to things outside the realms of physical nature or matter. Spirituality goes beyond the appearance of things to their underlying principles or forces. Living spiritually doesn't necessarily mean following a particular religion, but it does infer understanding that the universe has some order and that the creative force behind it (whatever that may be) is intelligent and purposeful.

Spirituality is highly practical. It is about finding meaning and purpose in an apparently imperfect world then using what we learn to create happy, healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives for ourselves and others. It is not, as we shall see, a special thing to be found in out-of-the-way places – it is Life itself, flowing, ever-present and abundant.

2 The Material World Is Not Ultimate Reality

Spirituality is founded on an appreciation that the world we detect through our five senses is not the ultimate reality. Objects that appear to be solid are not as solid as we think they are.

One of the first to understand this was the Greek philosopher Plato. He realised that everything we perceive through our senses is merely an expression of universal ideas or 'Forms'. These are independent entities which exist *whether or not we are aware of them and able to grasp them with the mind*. Love, for example, exists in the universe as an idea; we only become aware of it when it enters our experience. Even then, my experience of love may be different from yours. Meanwhile, the *idea* of love itself remains constant, permanent and unchanging, as do other universal ideas such as wisdom, justice, honesty, beauty and so on.

For more than two thousand years, Plato's theory was just that – a theory – and could not be proved one way or the other. Then at the beginning of the twentieth century it was verified by scientists when quantum physicists

discovered a ‘substance’ or ‘energy’ out of which all physical things are formed. In other words, the universe is not solid at all. It is made of energy – and so are you!

3 Shadows on a Wall

Plato devised a metaphor to explain how our limited view of reality governs how we think and act. He likened us to prisoners chained to the wall of a cave, unable to turn their heads. Behind them is a fire burning brightly, and between the fire and the prisoners is a raised path. Along the pathway walk puppeteers holding puppets that cast shadows on the wall. The prisoners are unable to see the puppets. All they see are shadows; all they hear are echoes made by objects they cannot see. They mistake the shadows for reality, knowing nothing of their real cause, and only when they are released can they can turn their heads and realise their error.

The great spiritual teachers taught us not to judge by appearances and to seek what is real, not what merely looks real. There is a reality that lies outside space and time, beyond our comprehension. We can explore ideas until we discover something that feels real to us, but we would be mistaken if we thought that our perceptions were ever complete.

Are you content in the cave? Do you want to see more? Experience more? Do you accept that you cannot know everything? To be satisfied with not knowing is a profound act of spiritual awareness.

4 Awe and Wonder

Do you ever reflect on the mystery of life? Do you experience an overwhelming sense of awe when you contemplate this incredible planet and the universe in which we live?

Next time you see a striking sunset, a rainbow or a beautiful Moon, pause for a few minutes and just look. Ask yourself, 'What exactly am I looking at? How did this come to be?'

Contemplate an open flower or a tree. Where did it come from? Why is it there? Why do I perceive it as I do?

Watch a star twinkling in the night sky. Its light has taken millions of years to get here. The star probably no longer exists, but you have no way of knowing. You are looking back in time!

Look at your skin though a microscope. What do you see? How did it get there? Why is it as it is?

Why do the beautiful things in this world – the trees, birds, flowers, rivers, oceans, animals, clouds – come into existence? Why do they grow, reproduce, break down and regenerate? We don't know, and that's OK. Spiritual seekers are comfortable with the notion that we live in a profoundly mysterious universe and that it is not for us to understand everything.

> *The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the power of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.*
>
> *Albert Einstein*

5 Spirituality and Religion

Many people are leaving the traditional religions because they cannot relate to the dogma and ritual that characterises them. Spirituality is not concerned with theology, but with life.

To be valid, a spiritual truth must be true for everyone, everywhere and for all time. It must apply equally to people living in the Arabian Desert, the Arctic wilderness, the Himalayas and a modern Western industrial society; in the fifth century BC, tenth century and the twenty-first AD; men, women and children; those who have passed on and those yet to be born. Individual religions seldom satisfy these criteria. Some are even restricted to a particular race or genealogy.

Religion and spirituality are not the same. A religion is a formalised set of beliefs. It lays down what its followers accept as true and how they should behave, insisting on compliance and reproaching those who transgress. Any religion which controls, divides and excludes cannot, in my opinion, be truly spiritual.

All *bona fide* religions began with a search for truth, but the living message of spirituality that they purport to offer has often been lost. I believe the founders of our great religions, all of whom were inspired by the best of intentions, would be distraught if they knew what is now taught and practised in their name. In a spiritually enlightened world there would be no need for separate religions, as John Lennon said in his song, ‘Imagine’.

Even so, all the major religions have much to teach us. When we study them in detail, we find that their common ground far outweighs their differences. Ninety per cent of their teachings are the same; wars have been fought over the other 10%, so let’s focus on the 90%! No one religion has exclusive rights to the truth. Look for points of agreement, put differences aside and seek truth wherever you can find it. Welcome the many different paths that are open to you.

6 Where Are You?

In his best-selling book *Further Along the Road Less Travelled*, M. Scott Peck pointed out that we are not all at the same place in terms of our spiritual growth. He spelt out four stages on the spiritual journey. If you had to choose the one which most accurately describes you, which would it be?

Stage One

Stage One people have little or no interest in spirituality. They appear to have few moral principles, live chaotic lives and are frequently found in prisons or on the street. Some, however, rise to positions of power, including some politicians, business leaders, etc.

Stage One people occasionally become painfully aware of their situation. Some weather it and some self-destruct. Some convert to Stage Two. When this happens, it can be sudden, for example a dramatic religious conversion.

Is this the first book of this type you have read? Have you previously rejected the very idea of spirituality? If so, it's possible that you are ready to move on from Stage One.

Stage Two

Stage Two people look to authority and are dependent on an organisation for their governance. This could be the military, a business organisation, public institution or religious body. According to Peck, the majority of traditional religious believers fall into this category. They rely on its teachings and rituals for stability and to deliver them from uncertainty.

Sooner or later some Stage Two people (often the young) question the need for an organisation with rigid structures, rituals and superstitions and begin to move to Stage Three.

Are you a person who respects authority and likes rules? Do you look outside yourself for leadership and control? If so, you're probably at Stage Two.

Stage Three

These people dislike authority and feel no need to look to an organisation for direction. Some are agnostics or atheists; some are drawn to other philosophies. They are truth seekers and (according to Peck) usually ahead of Stage Two in their spirituality without being religious in the usual sense of the word. They are often involved causes working for peace and justice.

Stage Three people often regard Stage Two people as brainwashed and gullible, while Stage Two people feel threatened by them because of their lack of respect for conventional beliefs. A typical Stage Three statement was made by Kylie Minogue (the pop singer): 'God is either a universal energy outside of us or a life force within us. Or both.' (Note the ambiguity!)

As they develop, they begin to glimpse a bigger picture and may even begin to take an interest in some of the mythology that engaged their Stage Two elders. At this point, they begin to move towards Stage Four.

Have you turned your back on organised religion yet have a sense that there must be more to life than you're currently experiencing if only you could find it? If so, you're probably at Stage Three.

Stage Four

Stage Four individuals believe in the underlying connectedness between things. They are comfortable with the mystery of life and seek to explore it more deeply. They are inspired by the great religions, but not bound to them.

At first sight, Stage Two and Stage Four people appear opposites, yet they have much in common. They know the same passages of scripture but interpret them differently. Stage Three people are baffled by Stage Four. On the one hand, they aspire to their awareness and spirituality while being puzzled about their interest in those old myths and legends.

Peck acknowledged that people do not always fall neatly into categories and that there is some overlap. For instance, Stage Three or Four people may turn to the church at times of celebration or stress, drawing strength and/or comfort from its rituals. They are also to be seen on religious premises when rites of passage take place – what clerics call 'hatching, matching and dispatching'.

If you have a deep sense of your own spirituality and the oneness of all things, you are probably at Stage Four (and have little need for this book)!

7 Beware the Weird and Wacky

Many wacky ideas have hit the book stalls and television screens over the past few years. According to recent surveys, about half of us believe in tarot cards, mediums and palmistry, and sales of crystals, incense, replica angels, pendulums and similar objects are at an all-time high. Books on Atlantis, giant lizards in human form, crystal skulls, crop circles, UFOs and unicorns circling the earth preparing to come to our rescue sell by the million and are taken seriously by a few – but they are not what spirituality is about.

Some of these things *may* put you in touch with your spirituality, but they can also dangerously mislead. *Psychic* does not equate with *spiritual*. The psychic world may appear real, but is not necessarily so. Psychics cannot know anything of a spiritual nature that you cannot discover for yourself.

Spirituality is all around and within us. To experience it, you don't have to rely on anyone else. Just open your eyes, raise your awareness and you'll *see* it working in your life.

8 Practical Wisdom

Practical wisdom is, like Plato's 'Forms', there for us. It will not come by paying lip service but must be *sought after* and *lived*. As it grows in us, we gain an understanding of our true nature. We look beyond the five senses to a deeper, richer life, and use our talents and energies to help make the world a better, more peaceful place for all.

A famous passage from the Bible advises: A*sk and it shall be given to you; seek, and you will find. For everyone that asks receives, they who seek find, and to they who knock, the door shall be opened.* This refers to spiritual awareness and wisdom. The original meaning of 'ask' was 'claim'. Claim awareness. Claim wisdom. Claim prosperity. Claim peace, happiness and love. This is one of the most important steps to spirituality.

Theme 1

The Intelligent Energy Which Permeates Everything

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2 All the works of nature indicate intelligence

Human beings have always sensed a power greater than themselves. In ancient times they believed there was a god or gods 'up there' looking down on them and a place below ground where they went after death. Because they didn't understand very much about the natural world, they reasoned it was under the control of these gods. If the gods were happy, they showed it by arranging bumper harvests and victory over their enemies. If they were unhappy, all manner of hardships and disasters befell their mortal subjects.

When it was shown that the Earth is a globe spinning around the Sun, the religious authorities felt threatened. They condemned the scientists and astronomers and banned publication of their work. In time, the Middle Ages gave way to the Age of Reason. Scientists showed that the material world behaved according to proven 'laws' which could not be reconciled with miracles, heaven, hell and an afterlife.

In the twentieth century, men flew to the Moon, bringing back photographs of the small blue-tinged sphere we call home. They looked beneath the ground and found nothing other than rocks and a molten core. There was no sign of gods living above the clouds or the walking dead below ground. 'Proof,' said the scientists. 'There is no God. We've been sold a lie.'

Or have we?

9 Where Do the Laws of Nature Come From?

There's a passionate debate going on in the USA about how this world was made and how we came to be on it.

On one side are the Evolutionists. They follow Charles Darwin's view that life evolved from tiny microbes in the sea. Those best suited to their environment thrived, multiplied and gradually became fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and finally us. Leading proponents of this view argue that we are the result of DNA reproducing and perpetuating itself. They believe they are supported by the scientific evidence.

On the other side are the Creationists, who believe the Bible is literally true, that the earth was made in six days and all this happened a mere six thousand years ago. Carbon dating techniques which show the earth to be much older than this are misleading, they say, because the Creator deliberately made it *seem* older. Some schools run by Christian fundamentalists teach only this view.

However, there is another group who support a third idea – intelligent design. They don't dismiss evolution, but argue that it's not just down to adaptation and the survival of the fittest, but that some organising intelligence is overseeing the process. If this is correct, what is this 'organising intelligence'? Is it just another name for God? Let's examine this question.

10 Science and Creation

Today, many scientists believe that we cannot dismiss the notion that there is but one source of everything. For example, in December 2004, a professor of astrophysics from Cambridge University, a man who has spent a lifetime

studying the origins of the universe, made this astonishing statement on television:

> *We cannot discount the possibility that the universe and everything in it was created entirely for our benefit.*

Is it possible that the next great scientific discovery will be proof that everything was brought into being by an all-pervading intelligence which maintains balance and harmony in the universe? Some leading scientists already believe so. For example, when asked about his religion, Professor Albert Einstein replied:

> *I do not believe in a God who maliciously or arbitrarily interferes in the personal affairs of mankind. My religion consists of a humble admiration for the vast power which manifests itself in that small part of the universe which our poor, weak minds can grasp.*

11 All Visible Things Come From the Invisible and Depend on the Unseen for Their Existence

Before Einstein, the world was thought to be a collection of atoms behaving according to fixed and observable 'laws', and space was exactly that – empty space. This explanation seemed to fit the data in Newton's day, but it changed with the advent of quantum physics. We now know that matter is merely energy condensed to a slow vibration. Break an atom down to its ultimate components, and we find microscopic particles spinning at great speed around a central core. What appears solid is actually more than 99.99% empty space: billions of tiny particles flying in formation, held together by an invisible forcefield. Everything in the universe is made up of energy. Even space is not really empty: it is a 'presence', an inexhaustible 'potential' that manifests in places as matter.

Moreover, when particles are studied in detail, they don't actually exist! Rather, they are *tendencies* to exist. They appear and disappear millions of times a second and move at inestimable speeds. We can't even assume they exist when they are not being observed. Quarks – subatomic particles – change according to who's observing them and the nature of the observer. For instance, if the observer is angry, he creates irritation in what is being observed!

Everything, including you, came out of an invisible energy field which, when investigated, is shown to have nothing in it!

How does it feel to know that everything you see, hear, smell, taste and touch is made up of particles that don't actually exist?

12 Why Does the Physical World Appear Real?

If nothing exists, then how is it that things appears solid? It's because our consciousness (our awareness and beliefs) tells us so. It is playing a trick on us. Nothing is solid, except in our imagination.

For example, take a pile of bricks. You can't *see* through it. It *feels* solid. You believe it is solid. If you were to try and break it with your hands, you would injure yourself. Your belief would be proved valid through painful experience.

A martial arts expert looks at a pile of bricks differently. He does not perceive it to be solid. He focuses his mind, directs his energy and smashes it with his bare hand without the slightest pain. His belief is also proved to be correct.

Who is right? Both! If your consciousness tells you that something is so, it is. For you.

13 What Holds It All Together?

If not even the particles that make up the atoms of which matter is formed exist, then what holds it all together? According to Max Planck (1885–1947), the theoretical physicist who originated quantum theory and who won a Nobel Prize for his work on the atom:

> *All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force . . . We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent Mind. This Mind is the matrix of all matter.*

What is this force? What can we say about this Mind that is the matrix of all matter?

Scientists currently believe that everything came from the Big Bang. Fragments suddenly appeared out of nothing, were flung far and wide and formed into stars and galaxies. But what was responsible for the Big Bang? If matter can disappear into nothing (black holes), is it also possible that it can appear out of nothing?

One thing we know is that the cause of the Big Bang was not physical. In other words, it was spiritual.

14 Can Science and Spiritual Philosophy Ever Agree?

Philosophers have never had a problem incorporating spirituality into their world view. Neither did the ancient sages of India, China and Japan. They

demonstrated in many remarkable ways that matter is an illusion created by the mind. Some of the ancient writings are astonishing in view of recent scientific discoveries. For example, the Rishis of ancient India knew that the energy out of which matter is formed could not have appeared out of nothing. They anticipated the first law of thermodynamics – which states that energy cannot be created or destroyed and that matter is a form of condensed energy – by thousands of years.

At times, scientists have opposed every aspect of spiritual philosophy. Equally, the religiously inclined often resisted the scientific method, believing that their faith already explained everything there was to know. Clearly, neither viewpoint is tenable, but it's fascinating to observe science and spirituality getting closer with each new discovery and in places appearing to merge. Nowadays, many who take an interest in the relationship between science, spiritual philosophy and religion realise that they are in fact quite compatible. Once we accept that there is a creative intelligence from which all energy and matter originates, the pieces of the puzzle fall into place.

15 A Life Force Flowing Through Us

In surveys, when people are asked if they believe in a Higher Power, the majority say they do. When asked what they mean by this, they can't say.

Anyone who watches a flower bloom, holds a new-born baby, gazes at the night sky or contemplates the ocean senses a life force flowing through us, an energy field of which we are all a part. But to explain *why*, our intellect is of little use. As Max Planck wrote:

> *Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are a part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.*

How can a finite being possibly understand the infinite? Should we even try? Isn't human intelligence too limited to encompass anything so vast? Muslims understand this completely. Allah, the name they use for the Creator, is beyond description. Allah can't be seen or heard, has no shape or form and no gender, but has always existed, will always exist and knows everything that can be known.

16 We Cannot See The Creative Force, But We Can See The Results

The creative force can't be seen or heard and has no smell, taste or texture, so we can't detect it through our five senses. Should this concern us?

No. Much of the physical world is beyond the range of human sensory parameters. Dogs can hear and smell things we can't, eagles have much better sight, bats sense radar-like vibrations we cannot, and we know from looking into a microscope that there are infinitesimal organisms living on our skin and in our bodies which we can never see with the naked eye.

If so little of the *physical* world falls within our sensory parameters, how much harder is it to visualise intelligence or an energy flow! Take electricity. We can't see, hear, taste or smell it, but we know it exists and can put it to good use. Similarly, we can't detect the creative force through our senses but we can observe the effects. When we appreciate that there is more to life than meets the eye we have taken a big step towards grasping our spiritual nature.

17 There Is Only One Power Working In The Universe

There is only one prevailing power in the universe. It is the same power that set off the Big Bang and brought the universe into existence.

This power is many times stronger than any we can comprehend. We know how much energy is released by splitting a single atom, but that is only a minuscule fraction of the energy that flows through the entire cosmos. This power flows through every atom and every cell of every living thing, including us. It flows through our bodies and activates our minds. We are dependent on it for everything, including our very existence.

There is no absence of life, potential or intelligence anywhere. Consider these words from the spiritual text, the Bhagavad-Gita: 'I am the Source of all spiritual and material works. Everything emanates from me.' This Source is in everything – you, me, the things you want in your life and the things you don't.

18 The Universe Has a Purpose

The creative force which brought the universe must have a purpose and is taking us in a definite direction. We don't know where for sure because the capacity of the human mind is so limited. We can only ever see a small part of the picture, but this need not prevent us from trying to make sense of the evidence available to us (as long as we are willing to amend our ideas when new evidence becomes available).

Imagine what it would be like to know where the universe and its offspring, the human race, are heading. What would it feel like to be in harmony with the creative force that drives this journey?

19 It Doesn't Matter What You Call It

The creative force has been called many things. Some call it God. God is the personification (or a symbol) of this omnipotent and omnipresent power. I prefer to avoid this term because it has negative associations for too many people.

Writers refer to it in a variety of ways:

- Higher Power
- The Source
- Spirit
- The Life Force
- Infinite/Universal Intelligence
- The Presence
- The Oneness
- Universal Love.

I refer to it mainly as CI – Creative Intelligence – because this conveys precisely what it is, but will use other terms too.

Do you have a preference? Are you put off by any particular term? Why do you think that is?

Whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that changes a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing power or spirit is God.

In the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists; in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is life, truth, light. God is love. God is the supreme good. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything.

Mahatma Gandhi

20 'Life'

J. Krishnamurti, a distinguished twentieth-century teacher educated in both Eastern and Western traditions, urged us not to be put off the *idea* of CI by worrying about what we call it. He wrote:

> *There is only one God as manifested in you, but I am not going to use the word 'God'. I prefer to call this Life.*

If you don't like the word 'God' (or any other particular term), follow Krishnamurti's advice and substitute the word 'Life' or any other that feels right to you.

Read the quote from Mahatma Gandhi above again, substituting** Life **for** God**. How do these words strike you now?

3 The nature of Creative Intelligence

The religious powers-that-be describe the qualities and characteristics of their particular deities in various ways. For example, the Old Testament God was equally capable of loving and acting out of vengeance, but beware if you were not one of 'His' chosen. The supreme being of Islam, Allah, and the God of Christianity are loving, fair and merciful, but mete out stern justice to non-believers in the afterlife. These beliefs are a matter of faith, relying on scripture written long ago.

However, there is another way of learning about Creative Intelligence. Its qualities can be inferred from science, experience and common sense. The world around us provides plenty of evidence that intelligence is at work. It has beauty, order, meaning and intent. What kind of power could produce these effects? Only a positive, bountiful and constructive life force. What would life on Earth be like if this were not so? Could we exist? How long would we survive? A destructive, negative life force would surely destroy its own creation.

The only sensible conclusion is that CI must be good, and since it flows through everything, then everything too must in essence be inherently good.

Creative Intelligence has a direction in mind for the universe, and since we can't prevent it from pursuing its purpose, doesn't it make more sense to try and understand it and harmonise with it?

> *God says to you, I have a dream. Please help me to realise it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, whose war and hostility, greed and harsh competitiveness, alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts.*
>
> *Bishop Desmond Tutu*

21 Creative Intelligence is Positive

CI is positive energy, a moving, active force that enables the universe to unfold in an orderly way. Imagine what it would be like if this were not so. Could life on this planet, where everything is in perfect balance, have been created by a malevolent power?

Only human ignorance and shortsightedness disturb the balance of nature. Imagine if we were to disappear like the dinosaurs millions of years ago; CI would soon return the Earth to its natural state of harmony. If humans were to raise their consciousness, rise above their destructive behaviours and help CI realise its dream of a perfect world, it would surely happen more quickly.

22 Evil Has No Substance

If there is only one power working in the universe, and that power is good, then evil has no inherent substance. Of course ugliness, violence, hatred and all manner of undesirable things appear in the world, but these do not create themselves. They are simply an absence of good things like beauty, peace, kindness and love. We must stop thinking that evil exists as an independent power working in our lives, because *thinking it* makes it an active force in the world.

Consider this: there is no such thing as *darkness,* only absence of *light*. We can have dim light, ordinary light, bright light . . . but darkness is *no light*. Only light is real.

Similarly, evil is the absence of good. It has no substance and cannot create of its own accord. Would an intelligent creative force build in to its design disease, war, poverty and unhappiness? No, these are human-made, the result of ignorance and destructive actions.

CI is good. It flows through everything, therefore everything is inherently good. Evil is the result of cutting ourselves off from this, our Source energy.

23 Creative Intelligence is the Source of Everything

CI is the Source of everything. It is the energy that created you from a handful of cells and grew you into a fully formed human being. It governs the cycle by which water becomes steam, which becomes clouds, which condense and fall as rain, which enables plants to grow and animals to thrive, before once again turning to steam. It governs the cycle of birth, life and death by which matter returns to the earth and becomes new life.

The universe is sensitively balanced to make life possible. A miniscule variation either way would bring life on Earth to an end (some say it is already doing so). Air turbulence over the North Pole changes global weather patterns. A burning tree in the Amazon forest affects air quality in London and Paris. A ball thrown into the air anywhere requires an adjustment to be made in space. A whale harpooned off the coast of Norway eventually disturbs the balance of life in the Pacific. If the conditions which sustain life were changed by the tiniest degree, there would be no animals or plants as we know them, and no humans trying to make sense of it all.

If this endless cycle of creativity suddenly came to an end, everything – including us – would immediately cease to exist!

One day a farmer came across a rambler resting in one of his fields. 'What a beautiful farm,' said the rambler, taking in the view. 'Just look at the fields of golden corn, the vegetables growing, cows grazing peacefully. God has been very good to you.'

'Yes he has,' replied the farmer, 'but you should have seen it when he had it to himself!'

24 CI Is Bountiful and Giving

Creative Intelligence knows what we need and is willing and able to supply all our needs, without limit. Nature is copious. It gives, gives and then gives more. A single grain of wheat can multiply until it fills a prairie and a handful of small mammals populate a meadow. Apple seeds that germinate produce thousands of apples. If humans did not interfere, fish would fill the oceans, the skies would be full of birds, and plants and trees would grow in abundance, all sustained by an infinite source of supply.

Everything is created in abundance with no thoughts of scarcity. There is unlimited energy in the universe, and all of it has the potential to manifest into physical form. Moreover, the universe, directed by CI, is expanding. CI, the power that flows through everything, is actually becoming *even more* abundant!

25 CI Gives Ideas

CI communicates with us. It transmits ideas. When received and acted upon, these ideas are transformed from their invisible, formless state into physical form. This is what is meant by 'manifestation'.

Many great thinkers knew all about this and gave the credit for their brilliant insights to this 'infinite intelligence'. They knew they could tune into this higher form of consciousness at any time and gain inspiration (see Chapter 16).

Manifestation begins when creative ideas are sown into our minds. The ideas which come from CI are not limited by time and space, past experience, beliefs, emotional programming or any of the other shortcomings of the human mind. We'll have a lot more to say about this in later sections.

26 CI Is Loving

Love is the greatest power in the universe. It blesses and heals, nurtures and brings out the best in us. It encourages us to act from the highest motives so we can become agents for good in the world.

This loving Presence (sometimes referred to as *Grace*) operates on our behalf regardless of whether we deliberately seek it and whether or not we believe in it. Its desire to express through us is so strong that we always reap *more* than we sow, even if we have not earned it, simply because all are expressions of the one loving Source.

Again, imagine if this were not so. What would happen if CI were capable of *hating* its creation? Doesn't bear thinking about, does it?

27 Amazing Grace

The hymn 'Amazing Grace' was written by John Newton (1725–1807), a British sea captain who had once commanded a slave ship. Gradually the cruelty of his activities dawned on him until in 1748 he experienced a religious conversion when his ship nearly foundered in a storm. Soon after, he left the sea for good. He spent the last 43 years of his life as a pastor in a small village, and toured the country preaching. He is said to have influenced William Wilberforce, who led the campaign to abolish slavery.

'Amazing Grace' tells the story of his inspired awakening.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come.
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

28 CI Has No Race or Gender

CI is clearly not a person and cannot be described in human terms. It is neither male nor female, nor does it belong to any particular race, cultural

group or nationality. This presents a problem for speakers of English because there we do not have inclusive terms for *he* and *she*, *him* and *her*, *his* and *hers* and so on. The closest gender-neutral terms are *it* and *its*, so these are the terms I shall use.

How do you feel when the Higher Power is referred to as 'it'? What does this tell you about your religious and cultural conditioning?

29 CI Is Impartial

CI does not discriminate and it does not take sides. It is there for all and willing to give to all. The idea that it favours one side or another in war, sport, business or any other activity is deeply ingrained in some cultures, but CI works the same for everyone irrespective of gender, nationality, colour or creed. How is it supposed to choose between a boxer who prays to Jesus and one who prays to Allah? Or a businessman who prays to the Hindu gods rather than Jehovah?

Listen to the Bob Dylan song, 'With God on our Side'. (You'll find the original version on his album *The Times They Are a Changin'*.) This song exposes the absurdity of believing that CI plays favourites!

30 CI Does Not Intervene Directly In Events

CI does not exercise power – it *is* power, an ever-present and silent power. It is part of us, and we are part of it. There is no separation between us (although we do have the ability to think of ourselves as separate).

CI cannot intervene directly in events any more than it already does because it is already fully involved. It maintains an orderly universe by laying down and putting into effect the laws by which everything functions. It is not independent from us but works *through* us, as illustrated by the following story.

31 What More Could I Have Done?

The river had burst its banks and flooded the town. The family had little choice but to move upstairs. That morning, they heard a voice. They looked out of the bedroom window. A man in a rowing boat was beckoning: 'Come, quickly, climb in.'

'Thank you,' said the parents, 'but that's alright. God will save us.'

The boat moved on. The flood waters continued to rise and had almost reached the window when a motor launch appeared. 'Climb in,' called the pilot, 'I'll take you to safety.'

'That's OK,' said the parents, 'but we trust in God. He'll save us.' The launch left, and the waters continued to rise. The family was climbed onto the roof.

A helicopter appeared. A voice called, 'We're letting down a harness, attach it to yourselves and we'll haul you up.'

'No thanks,' said the parents, 'If it's God's will, He will save us.' The helicopter flew off; the family drowned.

When they arrived at the gates of heaven, they were greeted by God. 'We believed in you: why didn't you save us?' they asked.

'I sent a rowing boat, a motor launch and a helicopter,' replied God. 'What more could I have done?'

32 We influence Creative Intelligence

The only limits placed on our ability to draw energy from our Source are our lack of knowledge and our unwillingness to learn and then apply what we know.

We live in an intelligent universe, and that intelligence flows through us all. Because our minds are part of this intelligence, it influences us continually. But it is not a one-way process; we also influence it continually. We do it through the activity of thinking. Whenever we focus our mental energy on something by giving it our attention, we affect it. We are in a very real sense co-creators, with CI, of our world.

The wonderful state of being in which we consciously work with CI to bring our ideas into manifestation is achieved by raising our awareness. This starts with building spiritual ideas into our consciousness. Putting them into practice then ensues naturally, and the desired outcomes result.

33 Stay Connected

Some years ago in an experiment, some apples were placed in a barrel. Most were loose, but a few were still attached to the apple tree. A month later most of the loose apples had gone rotten. Those attached were still alive and fresh. They had continued to take in the life force from the tree.

As long as we stay connected to our Source, life energy and intelligence flow through us. In reality, we can never be separated from our Source; however, we can *think* of ourselves as separate, and when we do, we weaken the connection, enfeeble ourselves and, if we continue, prematurely wither and die.

How good is your connection to your Source? Do you fill your mind with thoughts which lower your energy and weaken your Spiritual Power? How badly do you want to change?

The same stream of life that runs through the world runs through my veins day and night and dances in rhythmic measure. It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth into numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of flowers.

Rabindranath Tagore

34 Strengthening Your Connection To Your Source

Your link to the Source lies where creative energy flows into your body and into your consciousness – in your mental field or mind. Making the connection requires no special rituals or formality. You connect to the Source by:

- turning your attention to your higher things – this is entirely within your control, providing you practise;
- spending time in silence, stilling your thoughts and bringing them back to the here and now;
- seeking spiritual understanding – spiritual understanding grows as you affirm truth and allow it to influence the way you think, speak and behave;
- developing and trusting your intuitive powers.

35 An Exercise To Awaken Your Spiritual Power

Do this twice a day for four weeks. Sit in a comfortable chair, close your eyes, take a deep breath and relax.

Imagine yourself infused with Source energy. What does it feel like? How is your life different? *Know* that you are one with this originating Source.

Now affirm: 'I am a manifestation of Creative Intelligence. Every moment its life, wisdom and power flow into and through me. As it works in me, I am strong and at peace.'

Write this affirmation on a card and carry it with you. Speak it often with conviction as you go about your activities.

> *Every living being possesses the seeds of enlightenment. Living beings do not need to seek it outside of themselves because all the wisdom and strength of the universe is already present within them.*
>
> *The Buddha*

4 How the universe works

As we have seen, the universe is not run by blind forces. It is regulated by a field of intelligent energy. We have difficulty grasping this concept because the world appears so fickle and our untrained minds, dominated by the five senses, obscure the truth behind the appearance.

Consider a waterfall. Water cascades and sends spray everywhere. It appears chaotic, but every drop moves according to laws of motion which can be observed and measured. Similarly, the universe, which appears so turbulent to the casual observer, operates according to laws which are just as timeless and reliable, and work for our good. These laws have always existed, but we have not always been aware of them. For instance, there is no more electricity in the world today than ten thousand years ago, but it could not be harnessed until someone identified the laws by which it functions.

'Law' implies a rule which is unchanging, unyielding and continuous, established and enforced by some power. Whatever is 'law' today was the same yesterday and will be forever. Humans are not responsible for carrying out the laws which govern the universe, and we can do nothing to change them in any way. But we can learn about them and apply them. And just as we understand many physical laws, many spiritual laws are already understood, and no doubt others – physical and spiritual – are waiting to be discovered.

Spiritual laws apply to all and can be counted on 100%. When we honour them, we grow in wisdom, love, creativity, personal power and all the other things that characterise CI. When we think positively, we grow in mental strength, and when we act lovingly and show kindness to others, we feel fulfilled.

36 All The Troubles of Humanity Have Their Origin in Disregarding Law

When we understand the laws and work with them, we thrive; when we ignore them, we experience a measure of physical or psychological pain. Ignorance is no excuse: they work even if you have no knowledge of them, and if you break them inadvertently, the results are the same.

Hopefully the time will come when the spiritual laws are understood and applied by everyone to create a better world. In the meantime, your challenge is to understand and place yourself in harmony with them.

There are hundreds of known spiritual laws. The main ones which are discussed in this book are the Laws of:

- Cause and Effect
- Attraction
- Growth/Expansion
- Non-resistance
- Giving and Receiving (Chapter 12)
- Reciprocity (Chapter 13).

37 The Prime Law – The Law of Cause and Effect

Cause and Effect is the Law of Laws. It states that for every result or thing that exists, there is a cause, and every action has an effect. When you throw a pebble into a pond, the ripples spread out from the centre in ever-widening circles. So it is with our actions. Good actions are causes. They create good effects; bad actions create bad effects. The effects spread outwards, affecting other lives to a greater or lesser degree.

Actions are causes, so are words and non-verbal forms of communication such as facial expressions and gestures, and also non-visible things such as attitudes and emotions. However, *the chief causes are thoughts, since every action is preceded by a thought.*

38 We Reap What We Sow

We reap what we sow – but not necessarily *where* we sow. Every thought, word and action eventually returns to us.

When we lay down good causes by thinking good thoughts and acting on them, blessings return to us – love, prosperity, health and kindness, etc. But actions resulting from thoughts of selfishness, greed, ignorance, malice and so on also have consequences. They set up a chain reaction which eventually returns to hurt us.

The Law of Cause and Effect reminds us that we get out of life exactly what we put into it, and when we change the causes, we get different results. We cannot get something for nothing and if we try, we will eventually be caught out. Knowing this brings order and purpose to the mind and enables us to fulfil our deepest desires.

39 Don't Judge Each Day by the Harvest You Reap, But by the Seeds You Sow

A woman planted a flower seed in her garden. She carefully weeded and watered the soil until a robust plant grew. But no flower appeared.

She thought of digging up the plant, but finally decided: 'My business is to look after the plant; it is for nature to produce the flower.' The weeks came

and went. She cared for the plant and forgot all about the lack of a flower. Then one morning, she smelled a delicate fragrance. She followed the scent and – oh joy! There in front of her was a gorgeous flower!

Moral: the aromatic beauty had always been present in the plant, as potential awakened by her labour of love, awaiting the right moment to blossom. Take a leaf out of her book. Lay down the right causes, and the right results will surely follow.

> *The human heart has the seeds of love and the seeds of hate in equal measure, but we seem to be watering the seeds of hate more.*
>
> *Satish Kumar*

40 The Law of Attraction

The next major law is the Law of Attraction. The universe works on energy and attraction. The mind has a magnetic quality which attracts whatever we hold in our consciousness. Thoughts of good things attract good things: loving thoughts attract love, peaceful thoughts attract peace, thoughts of success attract success and so on. In the same way, thoughts of fear, illness, poverty and so on attract after their kind.

It has long been recognised that the quality of our thoughts influences every aspect of our lives. In the Bible, King Solomon says, 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The Buddha said, 'All that we are arises with our thoughts; with our thoughts we make our world.' The Roman scholar Marcus Aurelius wrote, 'A man's life is what his thoughts make of it.' William Shakespeare, an outstanding philosopher, wrote, 'Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'

The Laws of Cause and Effect and Attraction teach that success in any area of life comes from deciding the kind of life we want to lead, firming up our

intentions and thinking the kind of thoughts that are consistent with what we desire.

41 Focus On What You Want, Not What You Don't

Any line of thinking that we dwell and act upon takes root in the subconscious mind and influences our behaviour. When we focus our minds on what we want, that's what we get. Equally – and ironically – when we focus our minds on what we don't have and don't want, that's also what we get.

The creative process flows smoothly only when we turn our attention to what we want. The laws of flight were not discovered by people focusing on why things stay on the ground. The inventor of steel ships, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was ridiculed by people who understood only why vessels sank. Early psychologists were so obsessed with mental illness they had little understanding of what made people happy; similarly, focusing on disease does little to help us live long and be healthy.

To break a negative cycle, get your mind off what you don't want, because by dwelling on this you'll continue to attract it into your life. 'This is just the way I am,' is an especially dangerous thought. Change it to, 'this is how I choose (or intend) to be.'

Nothing is possible unless you align your thinking with success, believe you can succeed and then take the right actions.

42 Develop The Power of Concentration

Concentration is defined as 'the ability to direct your thinking in whatever direction you intend'. It is the ability to focus your mind on one thought, sound or object. Concentration brings the Laws of Cause and Effect and Attraction into play. Thoughts concentrated on with patience and determination cannot help but have effects.

We all have the ability to concentrate some of the time, but at other times our thoughts race from one thing to another. Concentration can be learned like any other skill, but must be practised. Start by practising this simple exercise. When you notice your thoughts wandering, say STOP and then gently bring your attention back to where you want it to be. Each time it wanders, bring it back. You may need to do this dozens of times a day at first, but you will find that it gets easier if you are patient and keep at it.

43 The Law of Growth

We think of the universe as having no definable boundaries, but in fact it is expanding. This is reflected here on Earth, where plants, animals and even continents are in a continual state of reproduction and growth.

CI is an ever-increasing power that constantly brings new life into being. A seed reproduces itself many times over, but it will die unless it leaves the safety of its shell and reaches out to the air and the Sun before blossoming. We too must seek to grow by giving up what we no longer need, welcoming and embracing the new.

Life without growth is impossible. Think of a plant: if it's not growing, it's dying. The same applies to all living things. Nothing remains exactly the same for more than a fraction of a second – including you!

44 The Law of Non-resistance

Much of our personal growth is accomplished by letting go of anything that weakens us and blocks the energy flow within. The best conductor of electricity is the medium that offers least resistance; similarly, the Life Force flows best through individuals who offer least resistance to it.

In practice this means not trying to fight the bad, but instead extolling and affirming the good. A daffodil planted in the midst of weeds doesn't try to kill the weeds before it can grow, it just draws energy from the soil and reaches for the Sun. Similarly, if someone blocks your path, don't react, mentally send them love and light, and keep laying down the right causes.

For instance, when you are in dispute with another person, don't attempt to return in kind whatever has been levelled at you. Put aside human pride, ambition and vanity and lay down the mental conditions which allow Creative Intelligence to put it right. Look for the good in every situation and make your actions constructive. This way, rather than adding to the negativity, you contribute to the solution. (There's much more to say about this in the following chapters.)

45 Miracles?

A Sufi scholar overheard an evangelical Christian extolling the miracles of Jesus. The Sufi calmly gestured to the plants and trees, the Sun and sky and inquired, 'What need have we of miracles, when the whole of life is a miracle?'

One hundred years ago, the idea of TV, mobile phones and the fax machine would have been considered miraculous, but only because the science was not yet understood. Once the relevant laws had been discovered, they were no longer regarded as miracles.

Universal Law is all-powerful. Religious people often believe that their prophets and saints performed miracles, but there is no such thing if by miracle we mean a departure from Universal Law. The prophets were aware of something we are not: we only think of them as miracles because we do not yet understand the laws behind them.

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Theme 2

We Have a spark of Creative Intelligence Within Us – It Is the Source of Our Spiritual Power

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5 What are you?

What *are* you? When you think, exactly who or what is doing the thinking? When you stare into a mirror, who is doing the looking?

There's a story of a young philosophy student who went to see his professor. 'Please help me,' he pleaded. 'There's a question that's been eating me alive. I can't sleep through worrying about it. Tell me, do I exist?'

The professor turned to him with a withering look and replied, 'Who wants to know?'

The question of what we are and why has always occupied great minds. Socrates, for instance, advised anyone who would listen to 'know yourself'. Someone asked, 'You tell others to know themselves, but do you know *your*self?' He replied, 'No, but I do understand something about this not knowing.'

Nowadays, we know a great deal more than in Socrates' day. Powerful microscopes reveal the building blocks of our physical form at cellular level. We now understand the brain so well that we know which clusters of tissue house which types of mental activity. We can even predict whether an individual is at risk of certain diseases from their thought patterns and emotional make-up. And yet how many of us can truly say we know ourselves?

A human being is a complex organism made up of a body, a mind and an energising force that brings life to the physical form. This energising force – Spirit – is present in every atom and cell, and when it leaves, we die. That's why we don't *become* spiritual beings – we already *are*.

You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.
C. S. Lewis

46 Are You a Body With a Brain?

One morning I knocked on my son's bedroom door. 'Are you up?' I asked. I heard a groan and then a voice answered. 'My body's up, but I'm not!'

Later that day, I turned on the TV. A reporter was interviewing a woman with piercings all over her body. 'Why did you do it?' asked the reporter. She replied, 'It's my body. I can do what I want with it.'

We use the word 'my' for things that *belong to* us but *are not* us: *my* coat, *my* car, *my* chair. Expressions like *my* hair, *my* face, *my* body, *my* brain, *my* mind, etc. infer that these *belong to* us but *are not* us.

What is this entity we call 'I'? Is it nothing more than a body with a relatively large brain?

47 Brain Cells Die and Are Replaced at Least Every Couple of Years

A human body starts out as a handful of cells. It grows, matures, ages and dies. Then it decomposes. At the molecular level, it constantly changes. With every breath, we inhale *ten thousand billion* atoms from the environment – each one modifying our physical make-up to some degree. Moreover, 98% of our atoms are renewed every year; if this were not so, we would die within hours, poisoned by our own waste.

The body is like a building whose bricks are constantly replaced. We grow a new skin and liver every few months and the skeleton, which appears so solid, regenerates every six months. Not one cell remains from the body you occupied two years ago. Even the brain cells, where your personality and memories are stored, die off and are replaced every year or so – yet your sense of self goes on.

48 Your Body and Brain are Only Part of What You Are

Your weight fluctuates; everyone's does. Are you more of a person when you put on weight, or any less of a person when you lose it? What do we mean when we say someone has grown as a person? Are we just referring to their physical size? No. We mean they have grown spiritually. They have become more capable or a more complete personality.

If you lost both arms and legs, would you still be the same person? Of course. Our sense of self can remain intact even if the body suffers horrendous injuries.

Your body is one part of who you are. Important – but only a part. If this is all you think you are, you are like an actress thinking she is the costume. As Walt Whitman wrote, 'There is more to a man than lies between his hat and his boots.'

49 Who or What Dwells Within This Body?

Try this exercise. Sit or lie down comfortably, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes and relax. When the mind and body are quiet and still, ask your inner self:

- Who am I?
- Who is this being that dwells within this body?

Ask slowly, concentrate and be patient. It will soon become apparent that you are more than just a collection of muscle, soft tissue and bones. There is a part of you that endures despite changes in your physical form. It is non-physical, that is spiritual.

50 Are You Defined by the Roles You Play?

People tend to define themselves by what they do. They introduce themselves by saying what they do for a living or talking about their home lives or their families. But these are their social and economic roles, not who they are.

Over a lifetime we play many roles – infant, schoolchild, student, parent, grandparent, and so on. We occupy many roles at once. For example, a man may simultaneously play the roles of father, son, brother, uncle, teacher, colleague, employer or employee, salesman, customer, friend and neighbour. Our roles also change several times a day, depending on where we are and with whom.

If we are what we do, what if we're not doing it? Do we become a different person? And if we're doing nothing, do we cease to exist?

51 Are You What Others Think You Are?

Many people think so. If someone repeatedly calls them an idiot, they begin to believe it. But if you are what others think you are, to whom should you listen? Different people have different opinions of you, and they change over time. Some know you from work, others from home. Some know you when calm, others when you are angry or stressed. Meanwhile, your deepest sense of 'I' stays constant and remains intact.

The real you is to be found *inside*. What others think of you – your reputation – is *outside*, in their minds. Your reputation is not of your making and is beyond your control. How can *this* be who you are?

52 Are You a Mind?

To answer this question, we first need to understand what we mean by 'mind'. Is it not just another word for 'brain'?

No. The mind is not a physical object, it's an *activity* – a collection of memories and thoughts. The brain, on the other hand, *is* physical. It is a small organ, weighing around 1.5 kg, housed in the skull. It sends and receives impulses to and from the cells of the body through a network of nerves.

Most of us were brought up to believe that the mind exists only inside the brain, but this is not true. You won't find the mind by dissecting the brain, because it is no more confined to the brain than the electrical field is confined to a magnet. It is located in every cell and also extends into the energy field (or aura) that surrounds the body. Otherwise, how could psychic phenomena exist? Most people have felt they were being stared at on occasions, turned round and found that someone was indeed looking at

them. This can only happen because the mind reaches out, beyond the body and brain.

The mind uses the brain in much the same way as you use your body – as a vehicle. The brain is like the hardware and the mind the software, which begs the questions: Where is the programmer? And who is the operator?

53 Are You Your Thoughts?

You are not your mind, and neither are you your thoughts. Your thoughts are always changing, but the 'I' is constant. Try thinking the same thought for five minutes. Almost impossible. Similarly with your emotions. Moods come and go, but the essence of you remains the same.

Even if you practise taking charge of your thoughts, you're still aware of the 'I' that is doing the thinking. As preacher Eric Butterworth wrote, 'I am not what I think. I am thinking what I think.'

Got it?

54 You Can Watch How Your Mind Behaves

Another reason why you cannot be your thoughts or that collection of thoughts called your mind is because you are able to mentally step back and observe it in operation.

Part of you is aware not only of *what* you are thinking but also *that you are* thinking. This part can judge a thought right or wrong, good or bad, and choose to accept or reject it. It is even possible to stop thinking altogether, in deep meditation for instance, and remain fully conscious of self.

55 So What Are You Really?

A human being is a complex organism made up of a body, mind and a spark of the Life Force (or Spirit) that brings life to the physical form.

➢ You need a body to operate in the world. It is simply an instrument used by the 'I' to carry out its wishes. We'll take a closer look at the body in Chapters 10 and 11, when we consider health and healing.

➢ The mind is the activity of thinking, remembering and imagining. It also regulates the functioning of the body.

➢ Spirit is the spark of energy and intelligence that brought you to life and sustains you. When you die, it leaves the body which, with no life force to animate it, decays and returns to dust. The force that maintains the body is the spark of Creative Intelligence present in every atom and every cell.

We are fragments of CI and have its qualities just as a droplet of seawater has the same qualities as the entire ocean. Therefore we are inherently creative, abundant, loving and good.

We don't become spiritual beings – we already are. In the words of philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 'We are not human beings having spiritual experiences, but spiritual beings having human experiences.' All we have to do is let go of whatever is preventing us from realising it.

56 Spiritual Beings, Perfect and Divine

Set aside 15–20 minutes. Take yourself to a quiet place. Be quiet and still.

Get in touch with the sensations in your body. Experience them. After a few minutes, be aware of the one who is observing those sensations. Say:

➢ I am not those sensations.
➢ I am not this body.

Then be aware of your thoughts going round in your head, in your conscious mind. After a few minutes turn your attention to the one who is observing the thoughts and say:

➢ I am not these thoughts.
➢ I am not *my* thoughts.

Then become aware of your emotions (or recall some emotions you had in the past, such as anxiety, anger, guilt or fear, etc.). After a few minutes, turn your attention to the one who is observing those emotions. While recalling them, say:

➢ I am not these emotions.
➢ I am not the . . . (anxiety, anger, guilt, fear, etc.).

Finally take your attention to the one who is observing all these – your Higher Self. Feel yourself connected to the unlimited energy Source and feel the life force flowing through you. Affirm: 'I am a spiritual being, perfect and divine. Nothing can hurt or frighten me, for spirit cannot be hurt or afraid. I manifest my real Self through this body now.'

When ready, open your eyes and return to your normal activities.

57 A Point of Light

Appearances are not our essence. We're paradoxes – we live in mortal bodies and are at the same time non-physical. Spirit brings life to your body but

can't be seen, heard, held or touched, yet is the only part of us that is real and unchanging.

The Spirit within us is sometimes portrayed as a point of light. Most science fiction fans are familiar with alien life forms that suddenly vanish into a point of light. Perhaps you would like to think of your spiritual essence this way.

58 The Difference It Makes

When you consider yourself to be nothing more than a physical being, your identity is based on the body and its needs. Your self-image revolves around its size, shape, age and colour. You compare yourself with other bodies, categorising and labelling them. You describe yourself in terms of your roles. Your values are based on material things such as money, belongings and status and your prime motivation is to try to possess these things. Happiness is gained through sensory stimulation.

Contrast this with how we feel about ourselves when we know we are spiritual beings. Now, we describe ourselves in terms of our character, aptitudes and talents. When meeting others, we look beyond appearances to the reality of who they are – spiritual beings just like ourselves. Above all, we don't need to rely on *things* to be happy – we are happy just *being*.

59 The Vital Force

Once upon a time, according to eastern legend, a quarrel broke out between the five senses and the life force, prana (spirit). Each claimed to be the most essential to the body. The eyes claimed to be indispensable because they alone could provide sight; the ears because they could hear, the skin's

sensors because they possess the faculty of touch, the tongue and nose because they make it possible to taste and smell.

After a long argument, they still hadn't come to a conclusion so they agreed that the best way to decide was for each of them to cease performing its functions in turn. They drew lots and prana went first. Scarcely had it begun to leave the body when a cry of anguish went up from the five senses as each felt the life force leaving. They were therefore reluctantly compelled to agree: Spirit is the greatest and most vital force of all!

> *How easy it is to remember the truth and thus return home: I am not my thoughts, emotions, sense perceptions, and experiences. I am not the content of my life. I am life. I am the space in which all things happen. I am consciousness. I am the Now. I Am.*
>
> *Eckhart Tolle*

6 The mind

As we've seen, the mind is not physical, but spiritual. It is not an object but an *activity* which extends from the brain into every cell in the body and the energy field surrounding it. It contains all the imprints that form your personality, including your habits, interests, memories, ideas and beliefs. It is shaped by your learning and the environment, and ultimately fashions the way you live.

The mind operates at many levels. We are generally aware of some and completely unaware of others. The levels of awareness that exist include:

- the conscious mind
- the subconscious mind
- the Collective Unconscious
- the Superconscious.

Each level influences the others since information constantly flows between them. However, the deeper, subconscious levels of which we are relatively *un*aware are many times more powerful than that of which we are aware, i.e. the conscious.

The deeper we go into the mind, the closer we get to our spiritual centre. It's like peeling away the layers of an onion, discarding the accumulated mental and emotional baggage until we reveal the Creative Intelligence that lies at the centre.

Understanding the mind and how its various levels interact with each other is important because it enables us to become more spiritually aware and more effective in our daily lives.

60 The Conscious Mind

The mind has often been compared to an iceberg, with a small portion floating above the water level and a bulky mass hidden beneath. The conscious mind is the 'visible' part. It is the small fraction of mental activity of which we are aware in any moment, and includes the facility of reasoning also known as the intellect.

Thinking at the conscious level is like talking to ourselves; indeed, we know the conscious mind as an ongoing conversation in our heads, one thought following another, and another. When we pay repeated attention to a thought it filters through to the subconscious and produces record-like grooves which play over and over again until the thought becomes a habit.

The conscious mind has only a fraction of the capacity of the subconscious, but it plays a major role in our lives. We can consciously feed new patterns into the subconscious, creating new habits, weakening old habits and replacing them with new. Similarly, we can weaken old habits by withdrawing our attention from them until. Eventually, they fade away.

61 Birds Flying Across a Cloudless Sky

Try this: Sit comfortably or lie back. Take a few deep breaths, close your eyes and relax.

Become aware of your thoughts. Without judging any thought good or bad, observe each thought. Where is it coming from? Where is it going? Why are you thinking that thought? Where is it taking you?

Picture your thoughts as birds flying across a cloudless sky, coming and going seemingly at random. Now take some control. Imagine them flying into your field of vision from one side and out of the other.

62 The Intellect

The intellect is the reasoning part of the conscious mind. It gathers, sorts and uses information, calculates, decides, analyses and makes judgements.

The intellect is a powerful resource, but it can mislead because it relies too heavily on the five senses. We know that our senses miss much of what is around us. Dogs hear and smell things we cannot; bats pick up vibrations and eagles in flight see tiny objects on the ground that would be out of our range. Moreover, there is a world of micro-organisms of which we knew nothing before the invention of the microscope, the optical telescope opened up a new understanding of the Solar System, and the radio telescope is still revealing galaxies millions of light years from our own.

The intellect is greatly influenced by childhood programming and cultural conditioning. Thinking habits we learned as children do not always serve us well in adulthood, so we must be careful: wisdom cannot always be deduced by logic and is more akin to intuition than reasoning.

If you function mainly from your intellect, ask yourself: Where has this way of being brought me so far?

63 The Subconscious Mind

A vast number of mental activities take place below the threshold of your awareness. These include:

- Regulating bodily functions such as body temperature, absorbing oxygen and nutrients into the bloodstream, waste disposal, the endocrine system (which monitors and controls the hormones), maintaining the immune system and healing. The subconscious normally acts separately from the conscious mind when carrying out these activities.
- Memory – the subconscious has vast data storage and handling facilities which record everything you perceive, do, think, say and dream.
- An instinctive goal-seeking apparatus, like a kind of automatic pilot. It guides you in the direction of the predominant thoughts and mental images you have fed into your mind.

The subconscious prevents the conscious mind from suffocating in its own thoughts. Can you imagine continually regurgitating every memory you ever had, or having to remind yourself to breathe and digest your food? Life would be intolerable, wouldn't it?

All the material in the subconscious is capable of being brought into consciousness. For example, when we dream, the barriers between the conscious and subconscious open and subconscious material drifts into consciousness. It also opens when we are daydreaming or in an altered state such as hypnosis.

The subconscious mind is responsive to the will of the conscious and has no capacity to think independently. Self-talk acts as a form of instruction to the subconscious, and like a faithful servant, it follows its instructions precisely.

What are you feeding into your subconscious? Where are you telling your autopilot to take you? Is it where you really want to go?

64 The Conditioned Mind

The term 'conditioned mind' describes those mental activities, both conscious and subconscious, which are the result of previous learning, including the patterns which were programmed in as children. If we allow the conditioned mind to dominate our thinking, we find it impossible to break away from old thinking patterns and behaviours.

Once an idea is accepted by the mind, it is extremely difficult to shift. This can cause psychological problems. For example, if you believe yourself to be stupid, the conditioned mind reinforces this view and resists any attempt to change it. A great deal of patience and persistence may be needed to establish a new thinking pattern.

Replacing harmful conditioning with new, positive thoughts is vital for personal growth. Once you know the technique, with practice you can eliminate any unwanted habit from your thinking and behaviour.

65 The Collective Unconscious

Individual minds appear to be part of a 'group mind', a pool of knowledge and wisdom passed down the generations through our genes and cultural conditioning. Some of this material is transmitted telepathically. This is the Collective Unconscious, a term coined by the psychotherapist Dr Carl Gustav Jung.

There is a great deal of evidence for this. Throughout history, societies from around the globe who had no physical contact with each other made leaps of progress at about the same time. There is also evidence of this in the animal kingdom. When one group of monkeys learns a new skill, other monkeys on islands hundreds of miles away start doing it too. Leading naturalists believe this is evidence of a psychic force connecting them.

The spiritual realms unite and connect us all. There is little doubt that one mind is able to communicate with others, rather like a computer logged on to the Internet. We don't fully understand how this works, but the phenomenon has been investigated and verified many times.

66 The Superconscious Mind

The Superconscious is the intuitive part of the mind. It taps into a source of knowing and inspiration beyond the world of the five senses. It is not restricted by logical thinking, nor is it subject to the same perceptual errors, nor is it bound by past experiences or cultural conditioning. No known limit can be placed on its activities – as we shall see in Chapter 16.

67 Consciousness

Consciousness is *awareness*: awareness of self, the world and its possibilities, and our extraordinary capacity (possessed, as far as we can tell, by no other species) to examine, evaluate and modify our own thoughts, feelings and behaviour. When we say a person has lost consciousness, we mean he has lost awareness of himself and his surroundings.

The world we live in is a product of our consciousness. If our consciousness is limited, then our experience of the world is too.

As long as we have the ability to think for ourselves, we can lift ourselves up to a higher level of consciousness. As we do so, the world around us changes – and not just in our perceptions. It is scientifically proven that when our thoughts about them change, things change.

Once we grasp the truth that we create our world from the inside out we are empowered. We know we are no longer controlled by outside circumstances, but by our own inner values and desires.

> *Until you can understand that nothing can happen to you, nothing can ever come to you or be kept from you except in accord with your state of consciousness, you do not have the key to life.*
>
> *Paul Twitchell*

7 Why are you here?

Why are we here? In short we don't really know. We know the universe is orderly and expanding, has purpose and direction, and is presided over by an organising intelligence. So where do we fit in? Why do fragments of Spirit take human form? What contribution do we make to the unfolding of the universe? Could it really be entirely for our benefit?

We can't see the whole picture at this stage in our evolution, but who knows, perhaps one day we will. We are like droplets in an ocean of consciousness: how can a droplet possibly understand the purpose of the ocean?

It's fair to assume that our purpose is to help bring to fruition whatever the universe has in mind for us. Part of this process is to become better channels for universal energy and remove anything that weakens our connection with our Source, Creative Intelligence. We must learn to express more love, creativity, growth, prosperity, wisdom and other qualities of CI. By doing so, each of us raises our consciousness and nudges the human race closer to its ultimate destiny.

> *There is a theory which states that if ever anybody discovers exactly what the Universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable. There is another theory which states that this has already happened.*
>
> *Douglas Adams*

68 Drawing Energy From the Source

As fragments of CI, we all have full access to its wisdom, love and power. When we align ourselves with spiritual energy by living in harmony with Universal Law, we become attuned to the creative flow. The only limits to our ability to draw energy from our Source are our awareness and intentions. The more we want, think about and feel the love and power flowing through us, the stronger the link.

We have free will, so we get to choose whether to connect more strongly or not, but whatever we decide, we take the consequences. For example, we can choose to be kind and loving, in which case Source energy flows freely, bringing good feelings and laying down causes which produce pleasing effects. Equally, we can choose to be hurtful, which blocks Source energy and brings bad feelings and unwanted effects. Whatever path we choose, sooner or later we will have to face up to the consequences, pleasant or unpleasant.

69 Your Reason For Being

You are a unique gift to the world. How are you going to make this gift as valuable as it can be? Start by clarifying your life purpose. Have a vision of how the world could be and your part in it. What's the Big Idea in your life, the theme that holds it all together?

We are all aware of our purpose at some level, although it may be hidden in the depths of the subconscious waiting to be discovered. Look within. The biggest clues are your talents and your interests. If you are not clear about what these are, there's a third clue – what you were good at and most enjoyed as a child.

We'll now look at each of these in detail.

70 What Are Your Talents?

CI has endowed you with certain talents, and it expects you to make the most of them in every area of your life. Ask yourself:

- What am I good at?
- What do I do better than most of the people I know?
- What do others most appreciate about me?

For example, are you a good communicator, a person who can bring peace to those around you? Do you get on well with the young, the elderly or the sick? Are you musical, sporting or artistic? Are you strong and able to do physically demanding work? Are you good at making or repairing things with your hands, taking them apart and making them work better? Do you have 'green fingers'? And so on.

Don't withhold your talents. Share them gladly. Be grateful for the opportunity to make your contribution in your own way.

71 Does Your Work Express Your Life Purpose?

Most of us spend a significant proportion of our time engaged in work. Does your work express your values and life purpose?

Ask yourself:

- Do I love my work? Does it energise me?
- Do I find it easy to go to work most days?
- Do work and leisure feel the same to me?

- At times when I feel discouraged about a particular aspect of my work, do I still maintain a deep feeling that what I'm doing is 'right'?
- Is there something else I'd rather be doing?

What do these tell you?

72 What Are You Enthusiastic About?

Your purpose will almost certainly have something to do with what you enjoy. Is it practical to follow your bliss? Absolutely! You make your greatest contribution when you live authentically and put your heart and soul into what you're doing.

What do you enjoy? Make a list, and then ask yourself:

- What proportion of my time do I spend doing things I enjoy?
- Does this include my work?
- How could I do more of what I enjoy?
- How could I increase the enjoyment I get from what I currently do?

73 What Did You Enjoy as a Child?

What did you enjoy when you were young, before pressure was put on you to choose a career and making a living became imperative? This is a potent question. Children are more closely in touch with their natural, spiritual selves. Their intellects have not yet developed to the point where they interfere with their intuitive guidance.

If you're not sure, ask people who knew you as a child or look through old mementos such as diaries and photo albums.

If this doesn't work, take time to sit or lie down comfortably, breathe deeply, close your eyes and relax. Imagine you are drifting back in time. 'See' yourself as a child in your imagination and silently ask your inner self, 'Who am I, and what do I enjoy?' Ask slowly, concentrate and be patient. You may need to do this several times before the answers come.

When you have some answers, ask yourself, 'Am I currently doing these in my daily life?' This can be very revealing.

74 The Clearer Your Vision, the Less You Have to Struggle

Spend time exploring your feelings about how you would like your life to be. Let a vision form of how you wish to live and what you want to achieve. The truer you are to your purpose and values, the happier and more productive you become, and the more open you are to receive the love, wisdom and other great blessings that are your birthright.

You also find that you have less of a struggle making the right things happen, and coincidentally, more happens around you to support you in the right direction.

If you don't live by your values and follow your dreams, you are not being authentic. You not only hurt yourself, but also your family, neighbours, the human race and your universe!

75 Life is a School

One of your reasons for being here is to make a worthwhile contribution to the world. Another is to make yourself the wisest, most loving and enlightened being you can, and to realise your true spiritual nature. The

world is set up to enable you to do this. Every experience and encounter with others offers you an opportunity for growth.

We come into this life to be educated, not punished, and we are always in exactly the right place at the right time to learn. Once a lesson is learned, further schooling is unnecessary and we can move on.

Train yourself to look for the meaning behind every experience. There's a learning opportunity in every situation, but you'll find it only if you're willing to look behind the appearances, stop judging things 'good' or 'bad', and trust CI to do its work on your behalf.

Learning is not necessarily effortless, but the hurdles we must overcome strengthen us and eventually speed our progress. We should concentrate not on the *effects*, but on setting up the right *causes*. If we succeed rapidly – great! If we fail, we make changes, try again and welcome the opportunity to correct our mistakes.

76 When You're Living Your Purpose . . .

When you express your purpose in your daily life, a great deal changes. You experience a greater feeling of fulfilment and well-being. You have more energy. You feel more loving towards yourself, others and the world. In addition:

- Self-limiting thoughts melt away.
- You take more pleasure in giving and receiving and seeing the beauty in our world.
- You trust the process of life and allow it to take you where you're meant to go.

- ➢ You have a deep inner sense that there is nothing to fear, no scarcity and no accidents. Everything is exactly as it's supposed to be and always turns out for the best.
- ➢ You understand that CI has no limits, and as you are a part of it, neither do you.

'How does one seek union with God?'
'The harder you seek, the more distance you create between God and you.'
'So what does one do about the distance?'
'Understand that it isn't there.'
'Does that mean that God and I are one?'
'Not one. Not two.'
'How is that possible?'
'The sun and its light, the ocean and the wave, the singer and his song – not one. Not two.'

Anthony de Mello

8 The Higher and Lower Selves

Our inner experience often feels like a tug of war as various streams of thought battle for attention and try to take charge of our words and actions.

Some are thoughts coming from the conditioned mind. These thoughts are based on the body and emotions and their needs. They lower our vibrations and weaken our connection to Creative Intelligence. Plato would say they keep us chained to the wall of the cave. They make up the part of the mind referred to as the ego or 'Lower Self'.

In contrast, we also have thoughts which strengthen our connection to CI and assist our spiritual growth. They come from the part of the mind referred to as the 'Higher Self' which is, in effect, the voice of Spirit speaking through us. We're coming from our Higher Selves when we're thinking, speaking and acting from a consciousness of pure love and peace.

Living from the Higher Self is living to our highest potential. We approach every challenge in a positive and loving way and our energy spreads out like ripples in a pond, influencing the people around us and, over time, making our contribution to a better world.

A human being is part of a whole, called by us the 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Albert Einstein

77 We Are Individual Expressions of the Whole

The first step in living from the Higher Self is to remember that we all have the same Source and the same life spirit dwelling in us. Although we are part of the one organising intelligence, through the ego we have the *ability* to see ourselves as separate and believe that we are so.

We are individualised expressions of the whole, like musical notes contributing to a perfect composition, and just as a single note does not embody the whole work, the work cannot be complete without every note. In other words, the universe would not be the same without you. It would be incomplete.

78 How Interconnected Are We?

Even in practical terms, our lives are so interconnected that the idea of a totally autonomous self makes no sense. If you doubt this, consider how many people it takes for you to have a shower. (No, this is not a joke along the lines of, 'How many economists does it take to turn on a light bulb?')

When you have an answer, turn to the next page.

The answer is, in all probability, millions. When you add together all those who built the reservoir, laid the pipes, designed and built your water heater, mined and smelted the metals that made the components, generated the electricity or supplied the gas, wood or coal, designed and built the shower and the tub, laid the drains, and planned, built and operate the water treatment facility, you have already counted several hundred thousand. And that's before you include those who manage the rivers and canals, built the dams and weirs, and the legion of managers, planners and administrators who supervise the process. And what about those who grew the rubber trees and produced the rubber for the washers . . .

You see, even taking a shower can involve several million people! And that's not counting the animals, insects, micro-organisms, fish and birds affected . . .

> *Man did not weave the web of life – he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.*
>
> *Chief Seattle, 1854*

79 Are You God? Yes I Am! Oh No You're Not!

Knowing that they are part of the One Mind that some call God, and wanting their followers to realise this too, some spiritual leader make the mistake of claiming that they *are* God. Typical is this statement made by a well-known Indian guru:

> *Yes I am God. And so are you. The only difference between you and I is that I know it and you doubt it.*

Let's examine this claim. God is a name for the organising intelligence that flows through the universe. It is the omnipresent spiritual substance out

of which everything is formed. Hence it is correct to say, 'I am a son or daughter of God,' or 'God is within me.' But God you're not, and neither are they.

80 When You Act From Love You're Coming From Your Higher Self

You're coming from your Higher Self when you're thinking, feeling, speaking and acting from the place of pure love and peace within you, and totally congruent.

To love is a decision which needs little explanation. When you make a conscious choice to love, you're incapable of selfishness and completely in tune with the spiritual laws. The ego (Lower Self) is put to one side, fear dissolves and you discover inner resources you didn't know you had. You become a channel for all the good that flows through the universe.

81 The Lower Self (or Ego)

The term 'ego' is used in many ways. In psychoanalytic theory it is the part of the mind that controls the pleasure-seeking 'Id' and is restrained by the conscience (the 'Superego'). We also hear people described as having 'a big ego', meaning they think too much of themselves. However, in the spiritual context, ego means the image of ourselves we like to present to the world – our idea of who we *should* be and who we would like others to think we are.

The ego is often well-defended. One of its functions is to conceal the supposedly 'real' self with all its weaknesses and vulnerabilities. We attempt to compensate by trying to impress others and get angry or upset when we think someone has seen through the pretence.

The ego is a product of past programming and greatly susceptible to fear and self-doubt. It is a tiny part of who we are, but it behaves as if it is the only part, like a wave thinking it is the ocean. Even thinking of ourselves as spiritual can be an ego trap if we think this makes us better than anyone else.

82 Recognising the Ego

To dismantle the ego, we must recognise its false ideas and beliefs, dispute them and let them go. It is not an instant process: years of conditioning take more than a few weeks to work through. Only a handful of spiritual masters have ever rid themselves of it completely, but this doesn't matter. Working diligently on yourself is rewarding in itself because it allows the Higher Self to play a greater role in your life.

The ego:

- believes that you are a physical being separate from everyone and everything else;
- sees others as a threat;
- believes it has to compete for status and attention;
- loves making comparisons;
- jealously safeguards its reputation, because it thinks this is who you are;
- has a need to be right and takes pleasure in proving others wrong;
- constantly seeks approval from others, since it cannot find it within;
- lives in the past and frets about the future, often overlooking the present;
- seeks to cushion itself against anything that could threaten its security;
- is controlled by the emotions, hence can be jealous, judgemental, boastful, mean and hateful.

Do you recognise any of these ego-based thinking patterns in yourself?

83 You Are Connected

Start by dropping the idea that you are separate from the rest of existence. You're not. Nor are you any better or worse than anyone or anything else. Spiritual energy is part of everyone and belongs to all. As John Donne wrote, 'No man is an island, entire of itself.'

84 Give Up the Need to be Right

Giving up the need to be right has nothing to do with whether you actually are right or not (which is often a moot point), *but avoiding making others wrong*. Let everyone have their say and keep your counsel. Unless you absolutely must (e.g. in a negotiation situation where the outcome affects your work), avoid arguments and disagreements and practise *not* responding to provocation.

In the greater scheme of things, you and your adversary are one, so does it really matter who wins?

85 Stop Judging

A judgement is 'a view or declaration of what is good, right or fair'. Some judgements are necessary because they help us to make good decisions. Take

driving for instance: judging speed, distance and direction are essential for our safety.

But there are other kinds of judgements: judging what is good or bad, better, worse, right, wrong, moral, immoral and so on. These are judgements of the ego.

Stop judging. Who are you to judge your fellow spiritual beings? How can you condemn the path they have chosen? What right have you to make statements about what they are doing and where they need to be?

86 Get Away From 'What's In It For Me'

'What's in it for me' is the mantra of the ego. Its first instinct is to stop seeing the wider picture and protect and take care of itself. The Higher Self has different priorities, such as 'What's most likely to benefit us all?' and 'How can I help?'

87 Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously

Ego-dominated people feed off others' approval. They are preoccupied with their reputation and easily take offence. They are easy targets for jokers and pranksters since they are easily upset and become aggressive when they feel under attack.

Learn not to take offence at what others say or do. Remember, when someone disagrees with you or criticises you, they're judging only your outward appearance, not the real you. Step back – there's always a funny side!

88 Put a Stop to Jealousy

The ego is dominated by fear. It begrudges others their happiness, talents and achievements, not recognising that one person's success can benefit all.

Jealousy is born of fear. In order to feel jealous, you must compare yourself unfavourably with others and wish you had what they have. Let go of the need to judge yourself against others. Take pleasure in their blessings and good fortune. Wish them happiness. What matters is not what others have or do or how you compare with them, but how far you have progressed along your path.

89 Constantly Remind Yourself Who You Are

Constantly remind yourself who you are. Change the self-talk (#95) and use affirmations (#210 and #211). You are Spirit in human form, part of Creative Intelligence – keep telling yourself. Stop looking outside and instead look within to where lasting peace and joy may be found.

Before long, you won't need to remind yourself any more – you'll just *know* it.

90 The Difference It Makes

When you discover the truth about yourself, that you are a spiritual being, your self-image is no longer based on your physical features. Your deepest values are spiritual/non-physical – happiness, peace, love, truth and so on. You transcend your previous limitations and tap into a well of creativity and abundance.

You are equally aware of others as spiritual beings on their own journey. You see them in terms of their virtues, values and talents. Love is your predominant feeling towards others. You are caring, understanding, empathic and considerate towards others.

You are your own boss, guided by your intuition, taking responsibility for your thoughts, words and actions because you know they are the seeds of your future harvest. You approach problems differently, knowing that if you want change you must focus on causes, and that it is absurd to expect effects to deal with themselves. You are self-reliant yet connected, at ease with yourself and warm and respectful towards others.

Isn't this what you want?

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Theme 3

We Co-Create Our World by the Activity of Thinking

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9 The creative power of thought

Thoughts are powerful things. They have substance and impact. They lead to actions, which bring results. They are the building blocks of our lives. We literally create our experiences by the activity of thinking.

A nineteenth-century scholar, Horatio Dresser, observed, 'Thoughts or ideas are the most real things in the universe. They are the interior souls of things and the underlying reality of all outward and visible objects.'

We can take control of our lives no matter what is going on around us because we, and we alone, control our thoughts. They determine what we become, what we achieve and the way we see others. When our thoughts change, so do our lives.

Thoughts come and go, but do you always make wise decisions about your thinking? Do you act only on your highest thoughts? When you understand the importance of right thinking and allow your thoughts to echo Creative Intelligence, you become a creative force and a force for good.

> *Learning to talk properly to the self is a spiritual endeavour. Thoughts from the past and worries about the future do not create good conversation. Instead, learn to talk to your mind as if it were a child. Talk to it with love. If you force a child to sit down, he won't. A good mother knows how to prompt her child into doing what she wants. Be a good mother to your mind; teach it good, positive thoughts so that when you tell it to sit quietly, it will.*
>
> *Dadi Janki*

91 The Law of Vibration

There are vibrations in space related to the underlying energy and intelligence that holds the universe together. Everything is in vibration. Sound, light, energy, matter and thought are all forms of vibration.

Imagine tossing a pebble into a pond and watching the ripples spread out. What happens when two pebbles are tossed into a pond? Two sets of ripples spread out. Where they intersect, they create a variety of patterns.

Similarly, you continually send out thought vibrations. The mind is constantly radiating energy – and so does CI. It emits a constant wave of thought energy. Where the two sets of thought waves intersect, a pattern is created. This is how your world is formed.

Imagine your thoughts intersecting with Creative Intelligence. What kind of pattern do they create?

Align your personal vibrations with the vibration of the universe, then you align with the very best life has to offer.

92 Thoughts Have Substance

Thoughts have substance. Thinking produces energy. The longer and more often you think something, the stronger the energy waves sent out. When your thoughts centre on higher things, your entire being rises to a higher rate of vibration.

Higher thoughts attract good into your life. You can think yourself into health, happiness, friendship and prosperity; similarly, you can think yourself into ill-health, depression, loneliness and poverty. If you think, 'I can't do it,' you create ineptitude and inadequacy and your thought becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. (The antidote for this disempowering state is to affirm, 'I can', loudly and often.)

Negative thoughts are nothing to fear as long as you know them for what they are – not the truth, just thoughts, and swiftly replace them with higher thoughts. There is no reason to think that any negative thought reflects reality.

93 Get in Touch With the Power of Your Thoughts

When you change the way you think about something, what you think about changes. Not just your *perceptions* of things change, but so do the things themselves. This is not conjecture, but scientific fact. Project positive thoughts into a glass of water, for example, and the energy it gives off measurably changes.

If you want to transform any aspect of your life, start by changing your thoughts about it. Decide the kind of world you want to inhabit and think the kind of thoughts that will draw it towards you.

Here's a useful exercise:

Take a few minutes to sit quietly and contemplate the life you desire. Take a few deep breaths, close your eyes and relax. Feel the flow of energy within your body. Realise that all around you, everything is being conducted in perfect harmony and that the same power that maintains order flows through you, is available to you and responds to the energy your thoughts are generating.

Reflect on the fact that your thoughts, intentions and attitudes can create everything you want if you focus on thoughts of what you desire.

Now consider the changes you would like to make in your life. Affirm that you will make these changes, starting by changing your thoughts.

94 Drop Unwanted Thoughts Quickly

Get into the habit of observing your thoughts. Isolate unwanted thoughts and let them go. Say, 'No!' 'Go away!' 'Stop!' or similar. Alternatively, tell yourself, 'That's an old thought. I no longer choose to think that way.' This technique is called 'thought stopping'. Persistent application of the thought stopping technique soon stems the tide of negative thoughts and weakens their power.

Drop unwanted thoughts quickly – the longer you cling to them, the harder they are to get rid of. Most of us never take control of our thinking – which is why most of us don't achieve as much as we would like.

95 Self-Talk

What we say to ourselves matters. Every word sends out a creative impulse to the universe. Do you know anyone who:

- Turns every conversation to sickness? Are they healthy?
- Likes to talk about how much things cost? Are they prosperous?
- Is always complaining? Are they happy?
- Enjoys putting other people down? Do they have many friends?

Obvious, isn't it? The more you talk about a situation – either aloud or to yourself – the more you fix it in place. You know if your self-talk is not

working for you by examining your life. Is it the life you dream of? If not, change your self-talk and get the Law of Attraction working for you.

Stop giving energy to things that haven't worked. For example, rather than thinking 'I don't like my job', create a mental description of the job you would like, then talk about it and visualise it until firmly imprinted in your mind.

96 Fill Your Mind With Inspiring Ideas

Spend time daily – the more the better – with inspiring books, DVDs and audio materials, and seek out stimulating talks and seminars. Surround yourself with positive people and choose films, TV and radio programmes that enlighten and uplift.

By the same token, avoid uninspiring and depraved materials that lower your vibrations, discourage and weaken you.

97 Words

Thoughts and ideas are expressed in words. Words affect the nerves and brain, enlarging certain parts and causing others to atrophy. They affect our health, motivate or demotivate us, transform an unhappy person into a happy one and help shape the world in which we live.

The Buddhist text, the Dhammapada, emphasises this. 'Just a single word that brings peace is better than a thousand useless words. Just a single verse that brings peace is better than a thousand useless verses.'

Become aware of the words you use. Use words and phrases which make you feel good, inspire others and align with your vision and purpose, and avoid any which are self-deprecating or disempowering.

98 Dealing With Mental Resistance

When you first become aware of the power of your thoughts and decide to change, you may notice a persistent voice in your head resisting your new way of thinking. This comes from the conditioned mind, the centre of your old habits, which hates change and feels threatened by it.

Give it short shrift. Tell it you recognise where it is coming from, and refuse to take any notice. Tell it to be quiet and go away. Negative thoughts create resistance to the universal flow of life and goodness. You don't want to think those old thoughts any more.

99 Beliefs

Beliefs are collections of thoughts or ideas which we hold to be true. All beliefs are learned, mostly in childhood. Most of our beliefs come from our elders. Nothing we *believe* (as opposed to *know*) is ever certain.

Beliefs are transitory in nature. Millions have died for beliefs that most of us no longer accept, for example:

- ➢ People were once tortured and killed for challenging the conventional belief that the world was flat.
- ➢ The Romans believed it was perfectly acceptable to watch their fellow humans being torn apart by wild animals as a form of entertainment.

- In South and Central America, it was once believed that the gods looked favourably on sacrifices which could include tearing out the hearts of live human beings.
- In Europe in the Middle Ages, it was considered God's will to burn and drown women who showed signs of heightened intuition.
- In the so-called 'Age of Reason' (the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), white Europeans thought it right and proper to buy and sell their African brothers and transport them as cargo thousands of miles into slavery.
- Only two generations ago in God-fearing America and South Africa, people were deprived of their human rights simply because they had darker skin. The churches justified this intellectually, and anyone who protested could be imprisoned.

Having adopted a belief, we take it for granted. We make the 'facts' fit the belief and ignore any evidence that doesn't support it. That's why unquestioned beliefs are shaky foundations for living, prompting the philosopher Bertrand Russell to write, 'I would never die for my beliefs because I might be wrong.'

100 Three Types of Belief

There are three main types of belief:

1. Beliefs to which we subscribe in public. We may not truly believe them all, but go along with them to impress, avoid upsetting others or creating a bad impression. We're normally aware which of our beliefs fall into this category.

2. Beliefs we tell ourselves in private, which may differ from what we believe in front of others. We may not be aware of some of these since it is possible to lie to ourselves.

3. Beliefs which are so deeply ingrained we don't even think about them. We may not even be aware that they are just beliefs. They affect most of what we do whether we're thinking of them or not. Sometimes a therapist is needed to bring dysfunctional beliefs to the surface and resolve them.

101 Religious beliefs

Religions are man-made sets of ideas. They form when people gravitate towards a system of belief which appears to explain the mysteries of our existence. These beliefs are reinforced by rules, rituals, social pressure and fear of punishment. Minds close, an 'us and them' attitude forms and there's danger of prejudice.

Most religions are inspired by high ideals, but, like all beliefs, they must be open to analysis, appraisal and criticism. All contain some truth, but none contain the whole truth because this has not yet been revealed to us at this stage of our evolution. There is only one source of absolute Truth – CI itself.

102 How Do We Know What Religion We Are?

A friend told me of an incident that took place many years ago when he attended a Methodist Sunday School as a child. One Sunday the teacher asked, 'How do we know we're Methodists and not Catholics or Church of England?' He retorted, 'How do we know we're Christians and not Muslims, Hindus or Jews?' The teacher had no adequate reply.

Most religious beliefs are socially conditioned. The religion to which we subscribe depends largely on where were born and what our parents

believed. I was born in England at a time when Christianity was the dominant faith. If I had been born in Southern India, I would probably have been brought up a Hindu; in Nepal, a Buddhist; in Israel, a Jew; in Saudi Arabia, a Muslem; in the USSR, an atheist; and so on.

Nowadays, less than one in five Britons claim to follow an organised religion, and these include virtually all Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs who take their religion very seriously. The vast majority of us have contact with religious organisations only for rites of passage – what clerics call 'hatching, matching and dispatching'. Hence those born in today's Britain outside the Asian community are likely to be raised with no religion at all.

Is this a bad thing? That's a matter of opinion. Truth does not depend on our belonging to a particular religious group (although this may help), but on understanding the spiritual Laws and putting them into practice.

103 Religious Symbolism

How do we account for the animosity that exists between the various religions and even between different denominations of the same religion when 90% of their teachings is the same? The explanation lies in the sad truth that the living message of spirituality is all too often hidden beneath symbols and metaphors that are mistaken for reality and rituals that divide rather than unite.

All religions use symbols to get their message across. For example:

- Some personalise CI and portray it in human form. They speak of the Father, the King, Lord and so on.
- Similarly, some religions teach that life's undesirable aspects are the work of an evil entity symbolised by a horned creature, usually part human.

Look behind the symbols and affirm the good in every religion. Train yourself to notice when you are thinking in symbols and metaphors and keep your attention on the real meaning.

104 Look Behind the Superficial Differences in Religions

Look beyond the superficial differences to what the religions have in common. For example, all major religions teach modesty in dress. That's why men and women are expected to cover their legs, shoulders and sometimes their heads when visiting a place of worship. Some religions take this further, insisting that women cover their hair when outside the home. The underlying motivation is the same – only the expression is different.

Just because another person's faith doesn't resonate with you doesn't mean it has no value. There are many paths leading to the same Truth. If someone wants to argue that one religion is better or worse than another, tell them you see the good in all religions and want everyone to be free to find the truth for themselves wherever they may find it.

As we grow in spiritual awareness, religious differences fall away, leading to a common experience that encompasses all.

105 Attitude

When a belief is expressed repeatedly *with emotion*, it becomes an attitude. People with a positive attitude see the world differently; they enjoy the best life has to offer, not because more good things come their way, but because they see the good in whatever comes their way. They also create better circumstances for themselves.

How do you feel when you approach a situation with a positive attitude compared with when you approach it from a negative point of view?

As long as we have the ability to think for ourselves, we can choose our attitude. We can establish causes intended to bring specific results. This is how we co-create, with CI, our circumstances and experiences in life – as illustrated by the following story.

106 The Traveller and the Monk

This traditional story illustrates the importance of attitude. One day a traveller was walking along a road. As he walked he noticed a monk working in the fields beside the road. The traveller turned to the monk and asked, 'Excuse me, do you mind if I ask you a question?'

'Not at all,' replied the monk.

'I am travelling from the village in the mountains to the village in the valley and I was wondering if you knew what it is like in the village in the valley?'

'What was your experience of the village in the mountains?' asked the monk.

'Awful,' replied the traveller. 'I found the people most unfriendly. I was never made to feel part of the village no matter how hard I tried. The villagers don't take kindly to strangers. So tell me, what can I expect in the village in the valley?'

'I am sorry,' said the monk, 'I think your experience will be much the same there.' The traveller thanked him despondently and walked on.

Later that day another traveller was walking down the same road and he also came upon the monk.

‘I’m going to the village in the valley,’ said the second traveller. ‘Do you know what it is like?’

‘I do,’ replied the monk, ‘but first tell me – where have you come from?’

‘I’ve come from the village in the mountains.’

‘And how was that?’

‘Wonderful! I felt very much at home. Everyone was so helpful, the children laughed with me and people were kind and generous. I am sad to have left there. And what of the village in the valley?’ he asked again.

‘I think you will find it much the same,’ replied the monk. ‘Good day to you.’

‘Thank you,’ the traveller replied. He smiled, and continued on his way.

10 Health is wholeness

Health means wholeness in every aspect of our being – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The terms ‘health’, ‘to heal’ and ‘holy’ all come from ancient words meaning ‘whole’.

Health is a *spiritual condition.* It has its origins in the invisible energy field from which atoms are formed. Good health is a by-product of good habits, physical and mental. When we give our bodies what they need, including plenty of loving attention, we increase the flow of life-giving energy. It is no accident that happy, positive, emotionally well-balanced people tend to be healthier and live longer.

Mind and body are one. Doctors used to believe that they were separate, but today’s enlightened practitioners admit this was wrong and are changing their entire approach to medicine. The body *is* energy in vibration, and energy is weakened by wrong thinking. Research shows conclusively that our thoughts can make us ill and make and keep us well.

Health and wholeness is there for us if we want it. If it were somehow CI’s intention that we be sick, any attempt at healing would be against its will, which is inconceivable! Encourage the Life Force to work through you and aim for nothing less than the best possible state of health.

107 What is Your Body Made Of?

At first glance the body appears to be made mainly of carbon, water and waste, but this is only its outward appearance. Through a microscope, we see that it is made up of cells. Cells are made up of molecules, which are made up of atoms. The atoms in our bodies are no different to any other atoms, being made up of subatomic particles spinning in formation, moving so fast that they appear solid. Thus we are made of the same stuff as everything else in the universe. We are, in a very literal sense, stardust.

The body is a marvellous machine, but it is the *life force* which makes it function. It appears to be a solid collection of muscles, bones and tissue, but it is formed of energy. We're a paradox – we live in physical bodies formed out of something non-physical, held together and animated by an invisible 'life force'.

We are, in fact, 99.999% empty space!

108 Imagine You Are Disappearing

Sit or lie down comfortably, breathe deeply, close your eyes and relax. Imagine your body is becoming transparent. 'See' how the world looks when you are invisible. How does it feel when light, heat, wind and rain pass right through you?

Do this for a few moments, then reflect. What have you discovered about yourself? How does the world seem now?

109 Your Body is Your Autobiography

The cells of the body are constantly renewed, and this process is directed by the mind. A healthy mind produces healthy new cells and an unhealthy mind, unhealthy cells. A lively, responsive mind draws spiritual energy into every cell in the body, and vice versa.

You'll have noticed that some elderly people look vibrant and happy despite the lines on their faces, while others lack energy and look miserable. It is not their years or their experiences that make them this way, but their thinking. In time, our attitudes begin to show in our bodies and our features. This is why it is said that our faces and bodies are our autobiographies. 'Perhaps,' wrote endocrinologist and authority on Ayurvedic Medicine Dr Deepak Chopra, 'our bodies are just the place our memories call home.'

110 Good Health Comes From Within

The body is self-regulating. Every cell possesses energy and intelligence to enable it to perform its function. Cells know what the body needs and what is good for it. They would rather destroy the organism than submit to adulteration.

Good habits create health. The body needs high-quality nutritional material (food, fluids, oxygen, etc.) for constructing cells, and effective elimination of waste materials. Give it the care it needs. Eat and drink well. Exercise, rest and cleanse yourself regularly. All these are essential for good health.

Most illness is due to disruption to the eliminative process, causing waste materials to accumulate and saturate the tissues. Efficient nutrient absorption and waste removal depend on the flow of vital energy in the

system. If this flow of energy is interrupted, the body becomes ill. Illness is in effect the body is protesting about mistreatment, asserting its needs, and then striving to free itself from its unhappy condition.

Love and respect your body and live in harmony with natural processes, then there is no reason why you not should be healthy to a great age. But good habits are not like medicine. They are not just for when you are ill. If you don't observe them all the time, you won't enjoy robust health and vitality all the time either.

111 Health and the Law of Vibration

The mind exercises control over the body through the Law of Vibration. Every change in vibration brings about chemical and electrical changes at the cellular level.

In times gone by, certain religions regarded the body as impure. They saw it as a distraction from matters of Spirit. But body and Spirit are one and the same. Spirit is present in every cell. It can make a strong body weak and a weak body strong. When it leaves the body, it dies – how integral is that?

You can strengthen your body by raising your vibrations. Higher vibrations override lower vibrations, and the highest vibration is love. Think of your body in loving terms. Cherish it. Bless every part and be grateful for what it does for you. Since like attracts like, the quality of your thoughts will be mirrored in your health.

112 Your Body's Energy System

Your body is condensed energy. It is subject not only to the energies in your environment (such as loud noises and the fields generated by electrical

equipment) but also other people's auras. The strongest influences, however, are energies created from within.

This was understood in ancient India and China. Thousands of years ago, sophisticated systems of healing were developed which are just as effective today. They relied on awareness that the body is regulated by seven 'wheels of light' or major energy points known as 'chakras'. The first five are situated along the spine.

1. The Base Chakra at the base of the spine relates to the adrenal glands, spinal column and kidneys.

2. The Sacral Chakra at the top of the triangular bone which forms the keystone of the pelvic arch relates to the reproductive system and legs.

3. The Solar Plexus Chakra in the lower back governs the nervous system and stomach and regulates blood sugar.

4. The Heart Chakra, related to the thymus gland, controls the immune system, heart and circulation. It is situated between the shoulder blades.

5. The Throat Chakra, situated in the neck, relates to the thyroid gland (which controls the metabolism) and governs the lung, bronchial and vocal apparatus and alimentary canal.

The sixth and seventh chakras are located in the head:

6. The Brow Chakra is found in the middle of the forehead between the eyes. It links to the pituitary gland which controls maturation and growth. This is the seat of the mind, effectively our command centre.

7. The Crown Chakra at the top of the head governs the other six. It relates to the pineal gland, which is responsible for the production of melatonin, a powerful antioxidant which strengthens the immune system. The Crown Centre is the seat of the highest frequency of energy vibration in the body.

You have a spiritual anatomy just as real as your physical anatomy, an energy field the condition of which dramatically affects your physical state. You can manage this energy field, for example, by being aware of the energy of people you mix with, your thoughts and the language you use. Seek out places with high energy (e.g. the natural environment, sacred sites) and distance yourself from anything that weakens your energy field, including negative ideas.

113 The Aura – Your Energy Field

Your energy field extends beyond your physical form. A field of electrical energy, the 'aura', radiates from you as a magnetic field radiates from a magnet.

Your aura expands, contracts and changes hue according to your health and your mental and emotional state. When you are well, it expands and glows brightly; when you are unwell or cut off from your inner peace, it closes in and turns dreary grey.

Although most of us cannot see them with the naked eye, we are aware of others' auras at a subconscious level. Another's healthy aura attracts and energises us, whereas we are deterred and unsettled by a dull aura.

The body's energy field can be photographed using a technique known as 'Kirlian' photography. Why not have your energy field photographed? There's bound to be someone in your area who practises Kirlian photography. You'll find it illuminating, literally!

114 Feel the Energy Flow in Your Body

You can experience the flow of energy in your body directly. Sit in a comfortable chair with your back and neck supported. Take a few deep breaths and close your eyes. Relax and be peaceful.

Move your hands up and down the chakras. Can you feel each one? Are they balanced? If they are uneven, place your hand over the spot, visualise or feel them becoming balanced and affirm that it is so. Then check again.

After a few moments, open your eyes. How do you feel? If you found this difficult, don't worry, it gets much easier with practise.

115 Reiki – Energy Medicine

Reiki is an ancient system of energy healing revived in the nineteenth century by the Japanese doctor Mikao Usui. The energy from which the body is formed is the same healing energy that flows through everything in the universe. Reiki healers channel this into their clients. It doesn't come *from* the healer, but passes *through* him or her.

Reiki works at the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels, balancing bodily functions, releasing blockages and suppressed emotions to promote natural healing, strengthen the immune system, clear toxins and release pain.

Reiki can be used for self-healing or treating others. It also works with animals and is effective whether or not the client is present with the healer. The fact that distance healing works is yet more proof that we are all part of one energy field, and that our thought-energy affects each other.

Instruction in Reiki is widely available but costs vary enormously. Excellent training can be had for a reasonable fee, while some providers charge extortionate amounts for no better than average tuition. Check out what you are signing up for before handing over any cash!

116 Kinesiology – Evidence of Cellular Intelligence

Kinesiology is a complementary healing system based on the principles of traditional Chinese medicine. The practitioner tests the strength in various muscles to identify problem areas, then restores balance within the body, relieves energy blockages and helps the body to cleanse itself of toxins and heal naturally.

Kinesiology taps into the intelligence present in every cell. You can easily verify this intelligence for yourself. Take a teaspoon of refined white sugar and seal it in a small brown envelope. Do the same with a teaspoon of vitamin C powder, and shuffle the two envelopes so you don't know which is which.

While standing, firmly hold your dominant arm horizontally and ask a friend to push it down while you resist. Notice the strength in that arm. Now hold one of the envelopes next to your heart with your spare hand and repeat the exercise. Notice the strength in that arm. Then remove the first envelope, place the second on the heart area, and test the strength of the arm again. Note what happens, then open the envelopes.

You will find that the arm holds up strongly with the vitamin C and goes weak with the sugar. Why is this? Because the body intuitively knows what is good for it and what is not.

117 The Mind-Body Connection

Mind and body are one. Thoughts travel along the nerves to the muscles, organs and tissues, influencing the process by which cells are renewed. Meanwhile, cells continually send messages to the brain. A state of peace and well-being creates healthy cells; anxious states do the opposite. When we turn our attention to the in-dwelling life force, we increase the flow of healthy energy.

The mind can make us ill, and it can make us well. Negative thoughts can give rise to headaches, an upset stomach, constipation and, in more extreme cases, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, cancer and all manner of conditions. Only by putting this right can the flow of healthy energy be increased and illness and disease eliminated.

118 Be Careful What You Think and Say About Your Body

Your thoughts send powerful messages to the nervous system. Approximately 600,000 signals travel from the brain into the body every second; information is then sent back to the brain which is interpreted and sent back out. There's a constant dialogue taking place, so if you hear yourself saying, 'You're a pain in the neck' or 'this is a real headache' don't be surprised if you get one!

You can raise your body's energy by sending health-giving messages through your nervous system to every cell in your body. Aim for nothing less than perfect health, be willing to accept it and agree to nothing less.

119 The Immune System

The immune system is the body's defence system. Its job is to distinguish between what is 'self' and what is not. Microbes, toxins and cells which do not belong are neutralised and eliminated with the aid of the white blood cells. The brain and immune system communicate continually through special pathways (neurotransmitters) and chemicals (hormones).

The immune system can be strengthened by healthy living habits and boosted by thoughts of love for oneself and others, cheerfulness and acts of kindness. It is weakened by depression, fear, worry and anxiety, hatred, meanness and repressed emotions – all of which cut us off from CI, our Source.

The common cold is a good example of how the mind can weaken the immune system and make us more inclined to illness. Colds are generally believed to be caused by microbes, and that we are merely passive 'hosts' to these organisms. However, we have some control over whether the microbes actually take hold.

In one experiment, volunteers gathered in a room were exposed to cold germs. Some became ill, while others stayed well. The researchers discovered that those who resisted the germs were the happiest with their lives and believed they were responsible for themselves. Similar experiments have produced identical results.

120 The Role of Beliefs

Your beliefs have an enormous impact on your health.

In her book *Positive Thinking*, Vera Pfeiffer relates the incredible tale of a convicted murderer in the United States who chose to have his wrists cut

rather than go to the electric chair. The prisoner was blindfolded and a warden traced across his wrists with a feather for a joke. He died instantly. There are similar stories of African tribesmen dropping dead when witch doctors pointed 'magic' bones at them. But it's not the bones that killed them, but their belief in the power of the witchdoctor.

If you are unwell and don't believe that you will recover, your *belief* (not the illness) will prevent you from getting well. Norman Cousins, who cured himself of a terminal illness after doctors had given up on him, wrote, 'Drugs are not always necessary. Belief in recovery always is.'

Those who believe that illness is a sign of failure on their part or a punishment for mistakes made in this and previous lives heal the slowest of all.

121 What We Can Learn From Placebos

Placebos are pills and potions with no active ingredients. They have much to teach us about the connection between beliefs, health and healing. Placebos are often used in clinical trials as 'controls'. One group of 'guinea pigs' takes the test drug, the other a placebo, and the outcomes are compared. It is not unusual for the improvement to be similar in both groups. Some patients even get the same side effects from placebos as if they had taken the actual medication.

The main factor in successful healing with placebos is the *belief* of the patient, hence the size, shape and colour of the tablets influence results, as does the healing procedure. Anything that makes the treatment seem more credible, such as the doctor's uniform and bedside manner, improves the placebo effect. Placebos are least effective when the patient is unconscious or unaware of what is going on for other reasons.

Placebos tell us something important about the mind–body connection. They are rarely used these days because doctors consider it unethical to tell patients a pill has an active ingredient when it hasn't. Pity. How much potential for safe, effective healing is being lost?

122 Pain

Pain is defined as 'an unpleasant and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage'.

Pain is a perception. That's not to say it's all in the mind, but a person's experience of pain is subjective. In other words, identical physical stimuli are perceived differently by different individuals. Moreover, pain is a *learned* phenomenon. Levels of pain vary according to the sufferer's family and social background, perceived (not actual) stress levels and beliefs about pain.

Hospitals around the world employ psychologists to run pain reduction programmes for patients in chronic and severe pain where there is no medical explanation. These programmes have proved highly successful – yet more evidence that the mind and body are not just closely connected, but inseparable.

11 Holistic self-healing

Many people worried about the side effects of conventional treatments are turning to holistic healing methods. And for good reason. It treats the patient as an individual and addresses the whole person, not just the illness. It is natural and gentle, and doesn't rely on poisons (drugs), sharp blades or burning (e.g. lasers) for results. It is suitable for all ages and dispositions, and most importantly, recognises that mental, emotional *and spiritual* factors all have a part to play.

Holistic healing is based on the principle that the part can never be well unless the whole is well. This can only happen when mind, body *and spirit* are working together in harmony. In my experience as a therapist, people with a well-developed spiritual perspective have a greater incentive to get better, more belief that they will and consequently recover more quickly.

Above all, holistic healing acknowledges that it not doctors or therapists who heal – they are only catalysts. Their role is to stimulate the Life Force or Spirit within, thus enabling the body to heal.

> *Pain, any pain – emotional, physical or mental – has a message. The information it has about our life can be remarkably specific, but it usually falls into one of two categories: 'We would be more alive if we did more of this,' and, 'Life would be more lovely if we did less of that.' Once we get the pain's message, and follow its advice, the pain goes away.*
>
> *Peter McWilliams*

123 The Remarkable Healing of Myrtle Fillmore

Myrtle Fillmore was born in 1845. She was repeatedly told as a child that her health was poor and that she was prone to tuberculosis – believed fatal in those days. It wasn't until her early forties when, having contracted tuberculosis, she attended a talk on healing by an influential teacher of the time. When she emerged from the hall, one thought repeated itself over and over in her mind:

> *I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness.*

Her belief that she was inherently fragile crumbled and within two years she was completely cured. The following year, at the age of 44, she gave birth to a third son.

She wrote the story of her healing. She told how she realised one day that life is a flow of energy guided by intelligence and that we can instruct the body to do as we require. She became attentive to her thoughts and prayed every hour for help from Spirit. She asked for forgiveness for past mistakes and told her muscles and organs that they were drawing on an unlimited Source and were healthy and strong.

After the healing, others asked her for help. She helped a crippled man to walk, cured a woman's asthma, helped a boy blinded by cataracts to see, cured a boy of tonsillitis and another of croup. She told all who sought her help that it was God's will that they be healthy and that the healing power of Spirit was within them. She later wrote a book based on her experiences, *How to Let God Help You*.

Her husband, Charles, meanwhile, a down-to-earth businessman with an enquiring, scientific mind, realised that something extraordinary had happened to his wife. He wanted to know the reason for the healing and

found many conflicting explanations, all of which led to evidence of a great power behind it all.

Charles and Myrtle went on to found a prayer and healing ministry, Silent Unity. She died in 1931, aged 86. Charles lived to be 94.

124 The Body Wants to be in Balance

The body wants to be in balance. Any imbalance indicates a state of lack, physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. Loneliness, fear, guilt, anger and so on can all lead to physical symptoms, or are a sign that some other aspect of our being needs correction.

I've known people who spend so much time at work they collapse exhausted every night unable to get pleasure from the fruits of their labours. One client who was permanently ill told me that his salary barely compensated for the stress to which he was subjected. I asked him why he stayed in the job. 'If I quit now,' he replied, 'I would lose part of my pension. I've only ten years to go to retirement.' I wondered if someone so beset with fear would live long enough to enjoy it.

Sooner or later a badly treated body will demand attention. If you are frequently ill, examine your thinking and lifestyle. Do you take good care of your body? Do you need to change your ideas or beliefs? Could it be that your Higher Self is sending you a message?

125 Only Spirit Heals

There's a saying, 'God does the healing; the doctor gets the cheque.' No doctor or therapist can heal you by themselves, because *it is not they who*

bring about the healing. Only Spirit heals. Healers work on the presumption that they can tap into this ever-present healing energy, whatever they choose to call it.

As soon as any part of the body becomes ill or injured, invisible forces get to work to repair it. The doctor's role is to facilitate these healing forces. That's why simple faith methods are often the most effective.

I have a friend who is a Reiki Master. She has helped thousands to regain their health, but refuses to take any credit. She took me aside once when I introduced her as 'someone who heals'. 'Please don't say I heal people,' she said. 'I allow the energy to flow through me into the person who needs it. If I were to let my ego get in the way, it wouldn't work.'

If you are ill, be receptive to the healing energies. Trust the power and promise of CI to heal.

126 The Bowen Technique – Gentle Adjustment to Allow Spirit to Do Its Work

The Bowen Technique has grown in popularity in the last few years because it has been proven to be effective. It consists of a series of gentle moves which use the body's natural ability to heal itself. Bowen therapists apply gentle pressure to soft tissue with fingers and thumbs. Once they have started the healing process, they leave the client alone in the treatment room for several minutes before returning to assess whether anything more needs to be done. This allows the body to recharge and balance itself.

Bowen therapy is offered to the body. If the body accepts it then it starts the process of healing. If it doesn't, then no harm is done.

Reactions to Bowen often belie its soft and gentle appearance. Some clients feel little other than a sense of relaxation. Others feel stiffness, soreness and headaches which demonstrate that the repair process has begun.

127 There Are Very Few Incurable Conditions

Try and think of an illness or disease that has never been cured. You probably can't, because there aren't many. There are well documented and verified cases of AIDS, cancer, diabetes and other 'incurable' conditions being cured. Medical people call this 'spontaneous remission', which means they don't have an orthodox explanation for it.

It's rarely the disease that needs to be treated, but the person. Nothing in our cellular structure, not even the most crippling disease, fails to respond to love, spiritual energy and prayer.

128 Do You Want To Be Well? The Problem of 'Secondary Gains'

When a patient fails to recover even when receiving the best possible treatment, we must question whether they really want to get well. Why? Some people like being ill. They enjoy the attention that comes with it. It may be the only time anyone takes an interest in them.

When a person subconsciously depends on their illness for sympathy, security and so on, we allude to 'secondary gains'. Secondary gains are the hidden or not-so-hidden benefits of staying ill. They hinder recovery because without the desire to be well, healing forces remain dormant.

I once had a client whose ex-husband allowed her to stay in the former marital home until she recovered from a debilitating illness. Years of treatment had brought no improvement – but where was the incentive to get well? She would have lost her home, her welfare benefits and not least all that sympathy and attention.

129 Don't Judge by Appearances – An Important Healing Principle

We live in two worlds simultaneously – the physical world bounded by time and space, and the invisible, formless world of Spirit. Our spiritual essence is always well; only in the world of matter do we vacillate between sickness and health. Only when we forget our true nature – perfection – and buy into destructive beliefs and unwelcome conditions do we suffer *the appearance* of ill health.

Focus your mind on what is true:

- You are a manifestation of Spirit, the only power working in the universe.
- There is no absence of life, love or intelligence anywhere.
- Every moment life, wisdom and power flow into and through you.
- Pain, sickness and old age cannot master the real you, whatever the appearances.

Turning your attention to the in-dwelling Spirit strengthens the Life Force and fills mind and body with new energies.

Spirit spoke to me very clearly, saying, 'You have looked among your faults; now look among your virtues.' And I did; and there I found the cause of the deep-seated physical suffering and congestion.

Myrtle Fillmore

130 Pray To Be Healed

Prayer facilitates healing (see Chapter 14). Through prayer, we claim health, instruct CI to restore health and strengthen our experience of it.

Pray to be healthy and whole and talk to your mind and body as you would talk to a patient. The Intelligence within will do the rest. Use affirmations such as:

- ➢ Health and well-being flow into every cell of my body.
- ➢ Love fills my whole being and dissolves anything detrimental to my health.
- ➢ I am a child of Spirit and it is right for me to have perfect health. I claim it now.
- ➢ Every day in every way I'm getting better and better.

Health and healing are your birthright. Your worthiness to be healed is never in question. Believe in your recovery. Have faith, because if doubt gets in the way, the healing flow is blocked.

131 Go Into the Silence To Heal the Body

Meditation – going into the Silence – has proven health benefits. It can reduce chronic pain, anxiety, high blood pressure, cholesterol and the stress hormone cortisol. It boosts brain function, the immune system and the heart and circulation. When we relax and clear our minds, we stimulate the life forces within, allowing the body to regenerate itself and become more youthful.

Moreover, when we send loving thoughts to a body part and affirm life flowing through it, we direct healing forces to it. A gentle focus of attention is all it takes to free the body of minor ailments, and more serious conditions can be relieved with regular practice. It can also prevent medical problems.

Try this: When in the meditative state, take your awareness to your body and notice any pain or discomfort – you'll find your attention *wants* to go there. There are lessons to be learned, so ask your Higher Self what your body trying to tell you. Then make the necessary adjustments to your habits or lifestyle.

132 Breath Awareness

To boost your energy and stimulate the Life Force, observe the gentle rhythm and subtle energy generated by the breath.

Relax, take a few deep breaths, then let your breathing settle. Imagine you are breathing in Source energy. It flows in, floods your body, then flows out (taking with it waste materials and toxins) and beyond. Experience the exchange as energy flows to and from you and your environment.

You can do this almost any time, anywhere. The benefits are immediate and profound.

133 Creative Imagery and Healing

Creative Imagery is increasingly used to help patients recover from, or cope with, chronic diseases. Eminent doctors such as Dr Carl Simonton, Dr Bernie Segal and Dr Dean Ornish, experts in the treatment of cancer and heart disease, use it with great success and have written extensively about their techniques.

The following is typical of the healing routines they employ:

1. Thoroughly relax your body and mind. Focus on your breath; imagine it as a form of healing energy. As you exhale, mentally direct this healing energy to the injured part. Affirm, ‘My . . . is healed and strong.’

2. Next, visualise the part as already healed. If it is a cut, see the flesh smooth and unscarred; if a break, see the bone neatly knitted together. If there is any swelling, see the joint back to its normal size. Don’t worry if you’re not sure what a broken bone or sprained muscle looks like – imagine how it will look once healed and let your unconscious take care of the rest.

3. Thirdly, visualise yourself doing all the things you will be able to do once you have fully recovered. Remember, focus your mind on what you want, not what you don’t, and you will be surprised how the healing process is speeded up.

134 Healing With White Light

The healing energies are often visualised as white light. Light symbolises loving, healing energy. For example:

1. Relax. Imagine yourself resting in a sanctuary bathed in pure white light. Go within and release your inner healing energies.

2. See the symptoms clearing, the light of pure love working on the body, strengthening and supporting, mending the joints and muscles, disease and negativity flowing out of the body.

3. Visualise your body bathed in light, strong, healthy, doing everything you want it to.

4. See the body infused with light and affirm: 'My body is strong and healthy. All my muscles and organs work in perfect harmony. Vitalising energy floods my whole consciousness and I am healed.'

135 Stay Well

With proper self-management, doctors would rarely be required, but you must observe the Laws of Health. If you ignore them, sooner of later the body will demand attention and force you to change your habits. But remember, if you want health, good habits are not just to be adopted when you are ill: use them continuously. Prevention is better than cure, and positive thoughts, wise words and loving actions are easily the best form of prevention.

12 Prosperity is a spiritual state

As spiritual beings we all have the potential to be prosperous, because prosperity is a *spiritual state*.

Economists think of prosperity as money in the bank and how much we consume. But this is not the full picture because it is not necessarily those with the most money who *feel* the most prosperous. We can own lots of things and *feel* poor; we can own little and *feel* blessed. It's hard to feel prosperous if we crave more, however much we own.

To be prosperous means having an abundance of good so we may live a full, satisfying life. We are prosperous to the degree that we experience peace, health, love, happiness and plenty in our world. Every area of our life can prosper when we become more spiritually aware. We see the world as fundamentally a place of abundance. We lose our fear of lack. Above all, we work on our consciousness, knowing that thought precedes manifestation and that when we develop *inner* prosperity, *outer* prosperity is ours too.

> *Think of Divine Abundance as a mighty, refreshing rain; whatever receptacle you have at hand will receive it. If you hold up a tiny cup, you will receive only that quantity. What kind of receptacle are you holding up to Divine Abundance?*
>
> *Paramahansa Yogananda*

136 Prosperity is a State of Consciousness

Prosperity is a way of living, being and thinking, not just money and possessions. It is ruled by the same principles as everything else:

- Every visible thing has an invisible source.
- Behind every physical thing is the *idea* of that thing.
- We influence the process by which invisible 'substance' takes form.
- Every thought and action is a cause set in motion and produces effects after its kind.

Prosperity comes from aligning ourselves with Spiritual Law and turning *inner* supply into *outer* riches. To bring what you need from the world of Spirit into the material world, first build the consciousness for what you desire, and second put in the effort to make it happen.

The feel-good factor in prosperity then comes from being of service, having a clear conscience and having the right attitude towards the results.

137 Be, Do, Then Have

In his book *To Have or to Be?* Eric Fromm describes a common fallacy. People spend their lives, he says, trying to:

> *Have* money and things so they can
> *Do* what they want, so they can
> *Be* happy.

The reason most never get what they want is because they have it the wrong way round. First you need to:

Be, then you can
Do, so you can
Have whatever you want.

Be *who* you need to be to fulfil your ambitions. Go within, find your purpose, know your strengths and use your gifts to the full. Then you will h*ave*.

138 What Do We Mean By Co-creating?

We are endowed with the creative ability of our Source. It is CI's intention to express itself through us with no constraints, so if you want prosperity, enter into partnership with it. Be still and allow yourself to be a channel for the Infinite.

What you desire already exists in the invisible world of spirit; it's just a question of bringing it into manifestation. For example, if you need a job, there's a perfect position for you even before you set out to look for it. If you desire a new house, the perfect house is there waiting for you to find it. The perfect partner is there too, waiting to make your acquaintance.

CI provides ideas and the means to actualise them, but it can do no more *for* you than it can do *through* you. It's up to you to work with the resources you have to hand to make it a reality. Open your mind, strengthen your determination and self-belief and take action. It takes faith and persistence to turn an idea into material form.

139 All Wealth Comes From Nature

Ultimately, wealth comes from transforming the raw materials that nature provides into something desired by humans. Nature is abundant. It gives, gives and then gives more. An apple seed can produce thousands of apples; a single grain of wheat can multiply until it fills a prairie; a few fish can populate a lake. Left to its own devices, nature's growth is exponential, and this is not confined to our planet: the entire universe is constantly expanding.

All wealth comes from nature. Imagine a million pounds, euros or dollars in the bank but no fruits of nature! Life would cease immediately. In his famous speech of 1854, the Native American leader Chief Seattle articulated this:

> *What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of the spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected . . .Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of earth.*

To you the earth yields fruit and you shall not want if you but know how to fill your hands.
It is in exchanging the gifts of the earth that you shall find abundance and be satisfied.
Yet unless the exchange be in love and kindly justice it will but lead some to greed and others to hunger.

Kahlil Gibran (From The Prophet)

140 The Universe is Willing To Meet All Our Needs

Prosperity is our birthright. It is not something to struggle for, but *accept*. Are you willing to accept it?

The Intelligence that created us knows what we need and provides it all. However, to make the most of what is available, we must use it wisely. Richard Causton put it like this (try substituting 'prosperity' for 'money'):

> *People often complain of not having enough money, but money is all around us, like the air we breathe. The real problem is that, just as some people are asthmatic, so others have a problem in their inner lives which restricts their ability to attract money into their outer lives.*

Prosperity is like a container brought to the well; the larger it is, the more you can draw. Take a large container to the well of plenty. There is no need to be deprived! The universe is willing and able to meet all your needs.

141 Scarcity is an Illusion

The spiritual substance from which all wealth comes is never depleted. There is no lack, but there is *thought* of lack, and the *thought* of lack produces the *appearance* of lack. Scarcity is accepting the *appearance* of lack as real.

When our needs are not met, this is usually an indication that something in our minds is creating a block which can only be overcome by changing our attitudes and beliefs about prosperity. For example, some believe that prosperity 'isn't for the likes of us,' or that 'it's not right for me to be prosperous.' What do you think they are doing to themselves?

Prosperity starts with consciousness. If our consciousness is limited, our world is too. If appearances say, ‘You can’t do it,’ go ahead and do it. If there are obstacles, remove them. Return to first principles: focus your mind on what you desire, lay down the right causes and trust the inexhaustible Source of supply to take care of the details.

142 There’s Plenty For All

Economists estimate that if we totalled the monetary value of all the wealth in the world – including publicly owned assets like roads, health facilities, buildings and open spaces, etc. – it would amount to at least £10 million for every man, woman and child alive today. If there is all this wealth in the world, then why are some people poor?

Obviously it’s unequally distributed, but if we all raised our vibrations and functioned from a higher level of consciousness, prosperity would be shared. Selfishness and greed are largely a response to fear; remove the fear and self-centredness disappears.

It has been suggested that if all the wealth in the world were gathered up and distributed equally, without a change in consciousness it would soon be back in the same hands. Frankly, poverty will only be eradicated when everyone learns to think and behave like a prosperous person.

143 In-I-T-I-A-te Prosperity

In my previous books, *365 Steps to Self-Confidence* and *365 Ways to be Your Own Life Coach*, I gave the recipe for effective and lasting personal change. It has five elements:

➢ Self-awareness

plus

➢ Intention
➢ Thinking
➢ Imagination
➢ Action.

This is the I-T-I-A Formula©. It applies to every area of life including prosperity. To create anything, first you must commit yourself to it, then adjust your thoughts, critically examine your beliefs, imagine yourself in possession of it, and take persistent action to make it so.

The I-T-I-A Formula© works because it establishes the chief *causes* that shape your character and your life. *Effects* don't change without working on *causes*. The underlying cause of everything is, of course, Creative Intelligence directed by human mindpower. When you plant spiritual ideas in your mind with the best of intentions, good effects always follow.

144 Do You Want To Be Prosperous?

The creative process begins with strong desire backed by commitment and persistence. Clear intentions bring the Law of Attraction into play.

Ask yourself:

➢ Do I want to be prosperous?
➢ Am I sure?
➢ What does this mean to me?

- Am I willing to work on myself?
- How will I use it to contribute to the greater good?
- Can I handle it?

Make prosperity a firm goal and commit yourself to making the necessary changes and doing what needs to be done.

145 Intend Prosperity For Others Too

In a universe of unlimited supply, prosperity is *not* a competition which results in winners and losers. Quite the reverse: this is an interdependent world. *We become prosperous by helping others become prosperous too*.

One person's prosperity creates prosperity for others. For example, writing this book started a ripple effect which has directly and indirectly created employment for thousands.

Include others in your prosperity thinking. Seek it for your family, friends, community and the entire global community. Rejoice in their happiness as much as your own and you will find happiness for yourself.

146 The Law of Giving and Receiving

> *Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.*
>
> *From 'The Book of Q' (a forerunner to the New Testament)*

Prosperity comes from both giving and receiving. Giving increases the flow of prosperity, but for giving to take place, there also has to be a receiver.

When we give, at first we appear to have less than before, but this is deceptive. Giving is a cause; it sets up a chain of events which lead to the giver receiving something in return, but this doesn't necessarily happen immediately, from the same person, or in the same form. Be careful though – if you give only to get, with a consciousness of selfishness and greed, all you'll get back from others is *their* selfishness and greed.

Receiving is equally as important as giving, and is nothing to feel guilty about. If you don't allow others to give to you, you are denying them an opportunity to contribute to the flow of prosperity. However, this doesn't mean grabbing everything you can. Sometimes it's right to say 'no' and let others receive. Consider each case on its merits and be guided by your conscience and intuition.

Mahatma Gandhi was boarding a train one day when a shoe fell off his foot and fell down the gap between the train and the platform. Unable to retrieve it, he took off his other shoe and threw that down the gap.

'Why did you do that?' asked a companion.

Gandhi explained that a poor person who finds a single shoe is no better off; what's really useful is finding a pair.

147 What Do You Have To Offer That Can Make You Prosperous?

We all have a contribution to make that assures our prosperity if we develop and use our talents wisely. Find something that you enjoy and takes you

where you are needed. You don't have to do everything yourself – set the Law in motion by laying down the right causes, let others add their contribution in their own way, and leave the rest to CI.

Dr Wayne Dyer wrote:

> ***Forget about you and all the things you're going to get out of what you're doing. Simply go out, head in the direction of your dreams, live your own kind of life, and success will chase after you and arrive in amounts greater than you can anticipate.***

148 Prosperity Consciousness

Have you noticed how some people always have enough, no matter what's going on around them? They open their minds to prosperity. They *know* at some level that they have the ability to attract. They have a prosperity consciousness, and so can you. Plant the seeds of prosperity in your mind and allow them to take root. Water them daily with positive affirmations and creative imagery.

Prosperity expands or shrinks to match your thoughts: thoughts of plenty create plenty; thoughts of shortage create shortage. Every time you find your mind wandering to 'Why don't I have enough?' or 'I'll never be able to afford *that*,' stop the thoughts and repeat to yourself, 'I refuse to give energy and vitality to poverty. Instead I give energy and vitality to prosperity. I think abundance, not lack.'

149 Poverty Consciousness

The opposite of prosperity consciousness is poverty consciousness. If you believe that prosperity is out of your reach and 'just getting by' is the most

you can hope for, you will always find life a struggle. You take a small container to the well of prosperity and half fill it. To go through life with poverty consciousness is like having a huge inheritance without realising it.

Poverty thoughts must be eliminated quickly. As soon as you allow yourself to think, 'I could never have . . .', you've created resistance to the flow of prosperity and inadvertently created a self-fulfilling prophecy.

150 Stop Worrying

Worry is a characteristic of poverty consciousness. It numbs the mind, extinguishes creativity and clear thinking and keeps you focused on what you *don't* have. Unless you stop worrying, you'll continue to attract more of the same.

If you are a worrier, set aside a fixed time each day to reflect on what you worry about. When you find your mind distracted by worry, tell yourself to wait until your special time and let the worry thoughts go. Research has shown that people who regularly allocate 'worry time' worry less.

Worry is another form of resistance to the flow of prosperity. Relax! Let it go! Everything you need is here and available to you. Get in tune with your Source, and it is yours.

151 Believe You Are Worthy To Receive

Your beliefs about prosperity are like the thermostat that regulates your central heating. Set the thermostat high, and the system maintains that temperature. Set it low, and it switches itself off as soon as that point has been reached. Where have you set your prosperity thermostat? Turn it up!

If you don't feel you *deserve* to be prosperous you are like a magnet that repels rather than attracts. Don't underestimate your worth. Don't sell yourself short and don't feel guilty about what you have (guilt is another form of resistance that pushes prosperity away). Not one person on the planet would be worse off merely because you were prosperous.

152 Have a Healthy Attitude Towards Money

Money has energy. It is a symbol of what natural resources and human ingenuity can produce to satisfy our wants and needs. Money is a means to an end, a lubricant which smoothes the flow of goods and services. There's plenty of it in the world, and it's available to everyone who is can use their imagination and think and act for themselves.

Money is a good servant but a very poor master. Cultivate a healthy attitude towards it, attract it into your life and put it to good use. If you won a million pounds on the lottery tomorrow, how would you spend it? If you don't know, then why would you want it? There's no point in having it unless it is used well.

Don't be jealous of those who are richer than you. How can you have a healthy attitude towards money if you feel resentful towards people who have more than you? What do thoughts like these attract?

153 Let It Flow

Flow is the underlying mechanism behind prosperity. Money in itself is useless; it has no value unless put to good use. Hoarding it cuts off the flow, so keep it circulating. Turn it into people helping others and doing and making things so they too can be prosperous and happy.

Prosperity comes *through* you, not *from* you. Only the barriers in your own consciousness can prevent it flowing as it should. When it flows, everything is as it should be and works out for the best.

154 Manage Money Wisely

Managing your money is a skill like any other. You'll only make the best of it when you know how to spend, save, invest, distribute and use it wisely.

If you believe you can't handle money, even if you acquired some you wouldn't have it for long. That's why so many lottery and games show winners, footballers and pop stars from poor backgrounds struggle to hang on to their wealth: rather than invest and use it sensibly, they squander it and find they are worse off than before. Some spiritually inclined people are just as foolish. They think that it is demeaning to take an interest in their finances, even failing to check their bank statements or seek advice when needed.

There is nothing unspiritual about managing money wisely. The difference is, when you bring spiritual consciousness to your financial affairs, you see money for what it is and take care to ensure that you use it to benefit others as well as yourself.

155 Gratitude

Everything we need for a prosperous and joy-filled life is here for us, so how can we not be grateful? Have an attitude of gratitude for everything that shows up in your life. Gratitude increases the flow, since whatever we are grateful for multiplies and becomes more useful to us.

Even if you suffer loss or have to do something distasteful, give thanks. Trust that all of life's experiences are learning experiences and that setbacks and hardships are not punishments but blessings in disguise.

156 Use Your Imagination To Generate Prosperity

Your imagination helps shape your world. Using your imagination intelligently gives your mind the self-belief to accept that you are prosperous. Once inner prosperity is established, outer conditions can be brought into line.

Create the 'mental equivalent' or 'prototype' by imagining what you desire as already yours. Picture yourself surrounded by the conditions you wish to create. Imagine a never-ending supply meeting all your needs. The more you imagine sense, visualise and feel yourself connected to your Source, the more you feel its energy flowing through you.

(There's more detail on Creative Imagery in my book, *365 Steps to Self-Confidence*.)

157 Focus On The Higher Qualities of What You Wish To Manifest

When you wish to manifest something or someone into your life, focus not only on the object or situation, but also on the higher qualities it will bring and feel that you are already experiencing those qualities. For example, if

you want to manifest a new home, think about the peace and happiness it will bring, and how you will share your good fortune with others. This adds to the power of your mental imagery and will attract the perfect home into your life.

158 Make It Happen

Your mental work will kick-start the prosperity process, but you must still do what needs to be done. Once you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve, what you must do to succeed and how you intend to go about it, get started.

Act as if your prosperity is assured from the outset. Act as if your highest aspirations are already there in non-physical form, on the way to being actualised, waiting for you to make them tangible. Never, never give up. Every challenge, every difficulty is simply a stepping stone on the way to success.

159 What Are You Thinking and Doing To Be Prosperous?

Is prosperity a problem area for you? Are you struggling financially? Do you lack the resources to do and have everything you wish? Then read this chapter again and ask yourself, 'What am I thinking and doing to create this, and what do I need to change?'

If you need more practical help, my book *365 Ways to Be Your Own Life Coach* is full of ideas for finding your purpose, setting goals, making an action plan and putting it into practice.

To appreciate beauty and find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, a redeemed social condition, to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

13 Our interconnectedness

We are connected to each other in countless ways. Apart from the obvious physical and emotional links between people, we all come from the same Source. The Life Force that flows through me also flows through you. We are made of the same 'stuff', breathe the same air and drink the same water. The differences between us are trivial in the wider scheme of things.

The most important principle behind relationships from the spiritual point of view is therefore: I am a spiritual being sustained by Creative Intelligence – and so is everyone else. We are all of equal worth. Only when we recognise the spirituality in others can we truly recognise it in ourselves.

As our consciousness expands, so does our appreciation of our interconnectedness. We see that relationships have a spiritual purpose. They are our greatest teachers and vehicles for growth. With a raised consciousness, we also learn to conduct our relationships better, so they become more fulfilling and more effective.

> *Man can no longer live for himself alone. We must realise that all life is valuable and that we are united to all life. From this knowledge comes our spiritual relationship with the universe.*
>
> *Dr Albert Schweitzer*

160 We Are Interdependent

We are interdependent, although many of us behave as if it were not so.

Imagine a large oak tree. At the top, branches spread forth in all directions, each covered with leaves. At the summit, the leaves appear separate, but as we lower our gaze, we see that they are connected to branches which merge into a thick trunk which disappears into the ground. Out of sight, the trunk connects to roots which spread out and draw water and nutrients from the ground.

Like those leaves, we appear physically separate, but draw energy from the same invisible Source. If one leaf dies, the whole tree is diminished. Perhaps this is why people come together to help the victims of natural disasters such as famines, earthquakes, floods and volcanic eruptions even though there is no *visible* connection between them and no *logical* reason why they should.

161 We Continually Transfer Energy To Each Other

We constantly give and receive energy from each other. If we don't, we stagnate and die. Anything that blocks the flow of life-giving energy between us harms everyone concerned.

We give and receive energy in many ways, such as:

- Subconsciously – through our auras. Just being in the presence of an inspiring individual can energise.
- Our thoughts have energy which carries to others.
- Visually – even a glance has energy.

- Auditorally – contrast the effect of a cruel remark with an admiring comment.
- Kinesthetically – a gentle touch can work wonders.

When we are with others, we continually pick up their energy, as they do ours. We also have the capacity to sense others' energy fields at a distance. Have you ever had a feeling that all is not well with someone you know who is far away? If so, you were probably picking up their energy field.

162 Namaste

Namaste (*na-mast-ay*) is a Sanskrit greeting which means, 'I recognise and honour the spiritual being in you.' Namaste reminds us:

- that we are all one and there is no separation;
- to look for the beauty in everyone we meet and overlook the shortcomings of their mortal personality;
- to approach everyone with an attitude of love and acceptance.

Treat everyone you meet with automatic acceptance and you'll find it easier to get on with them on a friendly basis.

163 Deep Down, We Are Beings of Peace

Deep down, at our spiritual core, the Higher Self wants to be at peace. Even those whom you dislike and who dislike you, who have hurt, bad-mouthed and cheated on you, are, like yourself, in essence beings of peace.

'What about murderers, rapists, drug dealers and child abusers?' you may ask. How can they be beings of peace? Simple: their spiritual essence is obscured by their ego and its insecurities. Like everyone, they do what they know according to their learning and experiences, and like everyone, when they know better, they change.

Let your peace show. Endeavour to be at peace with all, including yourself, by keeping your thoughts centred on kindness and peace.

164 There Is Goodness In Everyone

There is goodness in the heart of every human being. Billions of acts of kindness and self-sacrifice take place in the world every day, far outnumbering the unkind, selfish actions that make the headlines.

When you look for the best in others, you find it. Look past appearances and seek the good even though it may be buried beneath an unattractive exterior, harsh words and destructive behaviours. When you change your view of others, you change, and your experience of them changes too.

165 Looking After Number One?

We live in a society where looking after number one is not only fashionable but encouraged. There's a story of two hikers who came across a bear. One immediately shed his backpack, removed his boots and put on his trainers. His friend asked, 'What are you doing? Do you really think you can outrun a bear?'

'I don't need to,' replied the first; 'I only need to outrun *you*.'

We are here to grow as individuals and, just as importantly, support each other. Since we are all one, looking after ourselves with no consideration for others makes no sense. Since our words and actions return to us like a boomerang, selfishness actually harms the person we are trying to help – ourselves.

166 Relationships Are Like a Mirror

Relationships are like a mirror reflecting back the way *we* are. Through our interactions with others, we learn about ourselves. We cannot grow without taking in others. The feedback is immediate and sometimes harsh, but if we are open, illuminating. When we are gripped by the ego, we lose touch with our spiritual essence and react fearfully to others. If we're wise to these tendencies, we can reflect on our experiences and change.

When we learn to see relationships as a mirror, we clear the way to profound personal growth. No more blaming anyone else for our unhappiness or handing over responsibility for our behaviour. The buck stops where it belongs!

> *A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world. Everyone you meet is your mirror.*
>
> *Ken Keyes Junior*

167 Your Relationship With Yourself Is The Basis of Your Relationships With Others

We do not see things as *they* are – we see them as *we* are. We project our attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and misperceptions onto others. For example, people who are critical of others are usually privately critical of themselves; loud and boastful people are often trying to hide their anxieties; and people afraid that others will get one over on them are often looking to get one over on others. Similarly, if you're think most people are selfish, it's probably because *you* have selfish tendencies; if you believe others are unreliable, they'll constantly let you down; and if you're the jealous sort, your jealousies are likely to be driven by your own insecurities.

Your attitudes and beliefs say more about you than anyone else. As you grow in wisdom, you discover that it is not others' behaviour but your responses that create your experience of life, so if your relationships need attention, go within. Examine the causes, seek heightened awareness, and make love, peace and compassion the basis of your daily existence.

168 Silently Bless Everyone You Meet

Silently bless everyone you meet, including those with whom you don't get on. Mentally send them love and light, and wish them health, happiness and prosperity. Do this from the bottom of your heart whether or not you know them well, and especially if someone is aggressive or unkind.

After a month, take stock of your relationships: how have they improved?

169 The Law of Reciprocity

The Law of Reciprocity is better known as the Golden Rule: 'Treat everyone as you like to be treated.' However, as others have their own values and preferences, it is better expressed as, 'Treat everyone as *they* would like to be treated.' Most people like to feel accepted, approved of, respected, listened to and appreciated.

The Law of Reciprocity reminds us that we get back what we give out. Thoughts create effects which rebound, and so do words and actions. If you want more friends, be friendlier; if more love, be more loving; if more happiness, help others to be happy. Ask not, 'What do I want this person to do for me,' but, 'How can I help? What can I do for them?' Every time you meet another's needs, you meet needs of your own and feel better about yourself.

170 Compassion

> *How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong; because someday in your life, you will have been all of these.*
>
> *George Washington Carver*

Compassion is central to all spiritually motivated action. When we act with compassion, without condescension, we are acting from our Higher Selves. Compassion is an attitude that pervades all our words and actions.

Imagine what the world would be like if everybody were more compassionate? How many global problems could be solved?

171 Kindness

Kindness is compassion in action. When we show kindness to others, we benefit everyone concerned, including ourselves. Studies show that when a person is a recipient of a kind act, seretonin (the neurotransmitter that promotes a good feeling in the brain) is stimulated and the immune system strengthens. The same occurs in the person who acts kindly and remarkably – even observing an act of kindness has the same effect.

Be proactive. Look for ways in which you can help others. Offer practical assistance where you can. And remember: there is never a good reason to be unkind.

172 Communicate from the heart

When speaking, people communicate in three ways:

1. Words
2. Voice
3. Non-verbals.

Approximately 55% of communication takes place by non-verbals – posture, gestures, clothing, facial expression and so on. Thirty-eight per cent is communicated through tone of voice, pace of speech, accent and pitch. Only 7% of what we communicate comes from our words.

To illustrate, repeat this sentence four times, each time stressing a different word:

- I don't blame you. (stress: I)
- I don't blame you. (stress: don't)
- I don't blame you. (stress: blame)
- I don't blame you. (stress: you)

When we communicate from the heart, our words, voice and non-verbals are congruent and we affect each other spiritually. We can all spread peace and goodwill in this way.

173 Speak Kindly

Take every opportunity to offer a few kind words. It costs nothing, yet is worth so much to both recipient and giver. If they don't reciprocate or respond unfavourably, let it go; there's no point in reinforcing a cycle of animosity.

We are all aware of what hurts and what heals. Think about what you say *before* you open your mouth. If you're tempted to speak to someone unkindly, remember they too are Spirit and ask yourself, 'How would I feel if someone did (or said) this to me?'

174 Tell The Truth

Speak the truth as you see it, decently and with dignity. This means in practice not:

- lying
- slandering others

- gossiping and spreading rumours
- exaggerating.

If it is not possible to speak truthfully without being hurtful, consider whether it is better to stay silent.

175 We're All On Our Own Path

As spiritual beings, we have all chosen to be on a particular path. Others have made the choice which is right for them. Despite appearances, everyone is precisely where they need to be at any moment in time.

Mind your own business. The lessons others need to learn are different to yours. Learn your lessons; working on yourself sets a good example and is usually the best way of helping others learn theirs.

176 Live Your Truth

Others love you the most when you live your truth. You're unique. You're on your own path, determined by your situation, talents, skills, aptitudes and interests and so on. Others have theirs which determine the path *they* take. Comparing one path with another is meaningless, like comparing apples with oranges; both are fruits, but with different qualities.

The only meaningful comparison is who you have become compared with how you used to be, in other words how much progress you have made on your spiritual journey.

177 Don't Be a DOPE

Most of us are easily influenced by those around us. We find ourselves thinking and talking as they do and edit ourselves to win their approval. Consequently we start behaving like them too. We become a DOPE – Driven by Other People's Expectations.

This is alright as long as you like the results, but if not, examine your motivation and start thinking for yourself. What others say is not the issue. They don't know what's best for you, and you shouldn't expect them to.

Trust in your own assessment of what is right and true and make your own choices. If others try to put you off, *do it anyway*.

178 Non-Judgement

Our judgements are the biggest stumbling blocks to satisfying relationships. We constantly judge what others say and how they behave. We live by our judgements, but how do we know they are justified? What right do we have to judge our fellow beings? We cannot know what is right for anyone other than ourselves.

It's not easy, but giving up judging is essential for inner peace. When we stop judging we become more tolerant. We see the things we used to judge differently, as opportunities to raise our vibration by thinking higher thoughts.

When you are tempted to judge another, remember that they are on the path which is right for them, and are where they need to be. Tell yourself to stop, drop the thought and replace it with an affirmation such as, 'I gladly and willingly accept . . . as it is/they are.'

Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.

From 'The Book of Q'

179 Stop Judging By Appearances

A few years ago, a TV advertisement showed a shaven-headed young man running along a street towards an elderly woman and then pushing her to the ground. The camera pulled back to show a pallet of building materials falling from an overhead crane. Seconds later, they landed where she would have been if the young man had not done what he did. Far from being a mugger, he was a hero. He had saved her life.

The point of the advertisement was, of course, that it is dangerous to judge by appearances because we don't always see the bigger picture.

Train yourself to look for the reasons behind an individual's behaviour and learn from it if you can, but don't pass any judgement. Simply bless them. Be content to allow natural justice to take place.

180 We Label Ourselves With Our Judgements

When we judge another, it says nothing about them but a great deal about us. Judging someone to be an idiot doesn't make them one, but it does expose you as a person who needs to judge. Who would you be if you didn't have this need? How would your life be different?

Try this: Concentrate on thinking and acting non-judgementally for thirty minutes today. If you catch yourself judging, stop, drop the thought and replace it with an affirmation. If you don't manage it, try again tomorrow. If you succeed, think and act non-judgementally for an hour tomorrow. Gradually increase this until you can go a whole day without judging.

> *As rain falls equally on the just and the unjust, do not burden your heart with judgements but rain your kindness equally on all.*
>
> *The Buddha*

181 The Blame Game

The blame game destroys peace of mind. Blaming starts with making judgements. It fixes you in the past, distracts you from worthwhile actions, weakens your Spiritual Power and sets up conflict and resentment.

Don't blame anyone else for what appears to be wrong with your life. Take responsibility for putting it right. Equally, if others seek to blame you, it doesn't necessarily make it your fault. Ignore them; their judgements are their concern, not yours.

182 Bearing Grudges Harms Only You

I'm often struck by the way victims of crimes react when pressed to say how they feel in front of the news cameras. Some burst into tears, some express their loss and others express a desire for vengeance. 'We want justice,' they say. 'No punishment is sufficient to repay what they did. We'll never forgive. Why should we?'

This is understandable perhaps, but they are storing up trouble for themselves. No one can have peace of mind and at the same time cling to a desire for retribution. Anger overwhelms common sense. If someone treats you unfairly, let it go as quickly as possible, otherwise you are sabotaging your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

183 Practise Forgiveness

Judging, blaming, bearing grudges and forgiveness are closely related. Before you need to forgive you must have judged, blamed and felt a measure of fear. Otherwise there would be nothing to forgive.

If you're in an unforgiving frame of mind, there's a lesson you need to learn. What is it telling you? Listen carefully to your Higher self. Next time, if a similar situation occurs you will handle it better.

It is not for you to decide whether the recipient deserves to be forgiven or not. Creative Intelligence working through the Law of Cause and Effect ensures that justice is done. Forgiveness is not about condoning wrongdoing, but is part of the process of righting wrongs and putting something better in their place.

184 Five Reasons To Forgive

1. When we forgive, we free ourselves from anger, bitterness and resentment and create inner peace. Our bodies feel less tense. The incident becomes merely a memory, no longer charged with emotion.

2. Everything we give out returns to us. When we forgive, the bitterness evaporates and we avoid being on the end of others' bitterness in future.

3. We take responsibility for our lives rather than expecting something outside our control to happen or someone else to change.

4. We forgive not so much for the other person (they may know that we've forgiven them). We do it for ourselves. Who benefits the most when you forgive – YOU! There's a wise old saying: *Acid harms only the vessel that contains it.*

5. Forgiveness brings our awareness to the present. We let go of the past, stop plotting for the future, let go and move on.

185 Forgiveness Exercise

Make a list of anything or anyone you would like to forgive.

- Who didn't live up to your expectations and why?
- Who do you need/want to forgive and why?
- What have they done?
- What would you like to forgive?
- Can you think of a stress-free reason to hang on to your grudge?
- Send them love and light. Affirm: 'From this moment on, I send you love.'
- Decide how you will behave if you are ever in their presence.

186 Forgive Yourself Too

Guilt is one of most disempowering emotions, and one of the most common. Many people fret over things they can do little about, and some even feel guilty knowing they've done nothing wrong. Guilt is a futile

emotion because it is rooted in the past which, of course, can't be changed. All we can do is change our thoughts and feelings about it.

What about you? You deserve forgiveness as much as anyone else. What do you need to be forgiven for? Compassion for all beings must include you. You have made mistakes – we all have. At the spiritual level everything happened for a reason. Instead of feeling guilty, look for the lessons and don't make the same mistakes again.

187 Do You Find It Hard To Forgive?

Do you ever feel you're not ready to forgive because the wrongs you have suffered are too great? If so, start by *wanting* to, then *intending* to forgive. The willingness to forgive is a major step which allows CI to sweep through us and clear away the hurt.

- Examine your beliefs about forgiveness. Do you believe that you have to get your own back for every wrong done to you? Do you believe that forgiveness is a sign of weakness? Do these beliefs serve you well?
- Eliminate unforgiving thoughts. Tell yourself you don't want to think this way. Sow thoughts of love, empathy and forgiveness. Affirm – '**Perfect order is now established in my mind. I am at peace.**'
- Picture the person who you wish to forgive or look at a photograph of them. Surround this image in white light and affirm, 'From this moment on, I send you love and light.' 'See' the two of you as connected and equal parts of CI.
- Extend love, generosity and compassion to them and avoid petty acts of revenge.

188 Accept Others As They Are

Perhaps the biggest mistake we make in relationships is wishing other people were different and trying to change them. This leads only to resistance and resentment on both sides. They're not going to change for you unless they *want* to. Few will measure up to your ideals – and why should they? Do you always measure up to theirs?

Accept people as they are. Be happy for others to be themselves. Affirm, 'I gladly and willingly accept everything and everybody exactly as they are.'

> *The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.*
>
> *Thomas Merton*

189 Everyone You Meet Has Something To Teach You

Everyone you meet has something to teach you. Sometimes you only realise what you've learned with hindsight since it may not be obvious at the time. Usually you learn most about yourself, but it could also be about other people or life in general.

Welcome everyone into your life. Don't dismiss anyone whatever their background or appearance. See everyone you meet as a gift to help you in your quest for spiritual growth.

190 You Can't Change Others

You can't change others because you are not in charge of their thoughts. Nor can you control them. You can influence them, you can even take away their liberty, but you are never sure what they are thinking. They have their own thoughts and they are not yours to control.

Other people only change when they want to. They think for themselves and make their own decisions. And whose business is it anyway? Not yours! Once you accept this, you remove many of the difficulties you may have had dealing with others.

191 Seek To Empower Others

Seek to empower others. Help them to be themselves and fulfil their own aspirations, even if they are not what you would choose. Who are you to know what's best for them? Use this affirmation: 'I encourage and support you to be yourself, to follow your inclinations and behave in ways that you decide are to your liking.'

You'll soon find your relationships improving. Everyone is drawn to people who want for them what they most want for themselves.

192 Conflict

Conflict is an inevitable part of life. The ego, which rules most of us, loves conflict. It makes it feel important. The Higher Self wants to be at peace, so make friends with your adversaries as quickly as possible.

Most conflict can be talked through and resolved with a little goodwill on both sides. If you are experiencing conflict, remember:

1. If someone is aggressive towards you, they're attacking your physical form and personality, not who you really are.

2. Most conflict is not about you and them, but an opportunity to reflect on your growth and deepen your relationship with CI.

3. First deal with your own feelings. Try to work out any conflict within yourself and mentally send the other love and light. This can work wonders because your adversary picks it up at the energy level.

4. Let go of all bitterness and hatred and hence the misery that goes with them. They are harming only you and doing nothing to resolve the situation.

193 You're Right About That

Most confrontations are not worth fighting over, just differences of opinion. When you are engaged in an argument, ask yourself, 'Do I want this or would I rather have peace?' Then smile inwardly and say:

'You're right about that!'

It doesn't make the other person right, of course, but you're giving their ego what it needs. Over time, they'll see where you're coming from. They'll realise they're picking a fight with someone who won't fight back and amend their behaviour. Besides, you may not be right either!

(I picked up this tip at a talk given by Dr Wayne Dyer.)

194 Love Your Enemies

Problems with others usually occur because our own thinking is in error. With no enmity in our thinking, we have no enemies, which is why Abraham Lincoln observed, 'Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?'

An adversarial state of consciousness is disempowering and detrimental to our mental – and physical – health. Go within and seek the peaceful side of your nature where there is no enmity. If others don't respond, send them a blessing and let it go. Their anger and aggression is their problem.

Our so-called enemies are our finest teachers. Aim to make peace with them. Do this whether or not they deserve it (which can be a difficult judgement in any case) but to prevent your ego from dominating you and allow your Higher Self to play a greater role in your life.

195 Be Grateful to Those Who Test You

Eric Butterworth tells of a distinguished writer who visited a Quaker friend. Each evening, they walked to the street corner to buy an evening newspaper. The friend would be cheerful and pleasant, but the news vendor would always respond with a grunt. The writer commented on this one night. 'Why are you so nice to him?' he asked his friend.

The Quaker tellingly replied, 'Why should I let him determine how I am going to behave?'

Be grateful to those who make life difficult, and don't let them rule your behaviour. They contribute to your life's purpose and indirectly aid you in your spiritual growth.

196 Animals

Respect and care for all living creatures; they too are expressions of CI. They feel happiness and pain and deserve our kindness. Without animals, the planet would become uninhabitable and the human race could not survive. We share more than 95% of our genes with many of the higher mammals and are as interdependent with them as with each other.

197 Protecting Your Energy Field – Psychic Protection

Occasionally we meet people whose energy is so negative and overpowering that we need to protect ourselves. The best way is not to fight back, but to affirm your Spiritual Power. If this fails, create a protective mental shield around yourself to stop their destructive energy getting through.

If you are a *Star Trek* fan as I am, you'll remember that when the *Starship Enterprise* is under threat, the Security Officer creates an electronic force field around the ship which repels the attack. Use this idea to protect yourself from psychic attack. Say, 'Shields up,' and imagine yourself surrounded by an impenetrable forcefield. Affirm that nothing can harm you inside your safety bubble.

This may seem wacky at first, but give it a try. Like all techniques, it becomes more effective with practice.

198 The Big Secret of Fulfilling Relationships

Many people enter into relationships for the wrong reasons. They think about what they can get out of them and what they are willing to trade. As soon as they stop getting what they want, they break off the relationship.

Successful relationships, on the other hand, come about when all parties focus on what they can put in, providing they remain true to themselves. Otherwise, they are like actors wearing masks – hardly a recipe for long-term happiness.

You're unique and you're on your own path, but none of us can make it entirely on our own.

Theme 4

Prayer and Meditation Strengthen Our Connection to Creative Intelligence

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14 Affirmative prayer

What does 'prayer' suggest to you? I used to think of it as a silly ritual which involved kneeling, closing the eyes and clasping the hands together while a cleric read a prescribed text parrot-fashion. The congregation mostly listened passively, sometimes giving fixed 'responses' from a prayer book.

Affirmative prayer is different. It requires no special ceremony, is easily practised and has remarkable effects. Through prayer, we change our way of thinking, affirm positive beliefs and reject limitations, so raising our consciousness and becoming more confident and purposeful.

Prayer must be a daily priority for all spiritual seekers because insight, wisdom and peace are to be found in silent contemplation. The more you pray, the more effective it is. Prayers offered with sincerity never go unanswered.

> *And now, my friends, all that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is lovable and attractive, whatever is excellent and admirable – fill your thoughts with these things.*
>
> *The Apostle Paul, New Testament, Philippians 4: 8*

199 All Traditions Teach Silence, Stillness and Solitude

Every respectable spiritual tradition teaches the benefits of silence, stillness and solitude because this is how we strengthen our link with Creative

Intelligence. Learning, reasoning and intellect are all very fine, but only through silent contemplation can Spirit do its work.

Affirmative prayer is, in effect, concentrated positive thinking – and we know how powerful both concentration and positive thinking can be. It works directly on our consciousness, making us aware of limiting thought patterns and changing them. It lays down the right causes so the right effects manifest as life conditions. Through prayer, spiritual ideas become second nature.

200 Prayer Is Not a Ritual Performed Only By Professionals

To pray, you don't need to visit places of worship, and you don't need anyone, such as a priest, to pray on your behalf. Priests have no special powers that you do not.

Nor do you need to kneel, close your eyes and clasp your hands, and set words are certainly not necessary.

Find your own way to pray. You can pray anytime, anywhere, and in your own words.

Our thoughts are prayers and we are always praying
Our thoughts are prayers, take charge of what you're saying
Seek a higher consciousness
A state of peacefulness
And know that help is always there
And every thought becomes a prayer.

Anon.

201 A One-Minute Activity

Prayer can be a one-minute activity. At any time, you can pause, mentally switch off from your surroundings and pray. Affirm the presence of Creative Intelligence, then return to your activities.

We all benefit from taking a few moments to centre ourselves among the hurly-burly of daily life.

202 Prayer Changes the Person Who Prays

When you pray, don't ask for changes in your circumstances, but in yourself. This is what prayer is for. It brings about changes in the character of every cell in our bodies and in our energy field. When we change, of course, the world changes, in two ways:

1. Our *perceptions* change. The world becomes a more peaceful and loving place, reflecting back the changes taking place within us.

2. As we incorporate more of the higher qualities into ourselves, we become more effective. We are then able to make a real difference to our own and other people's lives.

203 Praying beggars

Prayer is not about pleading for miracles or flattering a supernatural being into taking pity on us. This does not work. CI does not intervene *directly* in earthly affairs, although, of course, it continually directs the unfolding of the universe by implementing Spiritual Laws.

Prayer is not for acquiring things or having our problems solved by an outside force, but for hastening our spiritual growth. We receive answers to prayers not in the form of miraculous interventions, but ideas. When you receive an answer or an idea, it's important to do something with it, even if you're not entirely sure what. Try something – anything that might work. Keep your wits about you and you will be guided towards actions that bring the right results.

> *As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will see prayer in all actions.*
>
> *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

204 What Do You Make of This?

This advertisement recently appeared under 'Personal Announcements' in my local newspaper. What do you make of it, bearing in mind my comments on praying beggars?

> *'Holy Spirit, who solves all problems, who lights all roads so forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances of my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things and to confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you, even and in spite of all material illusion. I want to be with you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine.'*
>
> *The person must say this prayer for three consecutive days. After three days the favour requested will be granted even if it may appear difficult. This prayer, including these instructions, must be published immediately after the favour is granted without mentioning the favour, only your initials should appear at the bottom. (It ended with two sets of initials.)*

205 Prayer Works

Prayer opens up the flow of spiritual energy and creativity. It has been shown to be effective in many studies, and the explanation is not difficult to find. It aligns our thoughts with the highest vibrations of the universe.

Alan Cohen echoes my own experience of prayer: 'Whenever I have needed guidance,' he writes, 'I have never failed to receive it. For any question I have asked in earnest and sincerity, an answer has come. It is not always an answer that I want to hear, or that I expect to hear, or that I understand, and it does not always come immediately, but it is always one that works.'

The next few pages suggest ways of making your prayers most effective.

206 Pray Alone, In Private

Communal prayer can be a vehicle for unity and peace, especially where people of different faiths get together and pray with the same intent. However, prayer is best alone, in private. Spend some time in prayer every day.

Go to a quiet place, put a 'do not disturb' sign on the door and close it behind you. Become aware of the Presence. Concentrate on and speak ideas of truth. Use your own words, as long as they come from the heart.

207 Pray With Purpose

When you pray, be clear on the conditions you wish to create. How do you wish to change? What do you want to accomplish? How do you want your

life to be? If you're not sure, go within and ask. Invite your Higher Self to guide you. Ask for ideas and for the *means* to meet your highest needs.

Your prime purpose, of course, is to deepen and broaden your spirituality, so ask how you can let go of resistance and be a better channel for Spirit to work through you.

208 Pray to Creative Intelligence

To whom or what should we address our prayers? The answer is – the Creative Intelligence within, that flows through us and is the source of our Spiritual Power. Pray from the perspective of what you are – a spiritual being, a co-creator, a being of light.

Talk to it not as an inferior, but as a child addressing a loving parent. Ask for what you want using positive language. Ask for healing, not to overcome illness; ask for prosperity rather than relief from poverty; ask for happiness, peace, wisdom, strength, love, inspiration, empathy and so on.

Creative Intelligence can only supply good. How can you ask it for anything it doesn't have?

209 Denials

Prayer has two main mechanisms – denials and affirmations. To deny means 'to declare untrue'. Denial is letting go of unwanted thoughts and mistaken beliefs. The process is then completed by affirming what is true.

Denials begin the process of change. When we want to grow something in the garden, first we dig up the weeds, clear the ground and prepare the soil,

then we plant seeds, add water and fertilise. Denials are akin to preparing the ground.

In prayer, meet each unwanted thought with a denial, then affirm the good. Use the words ‘release’ or ‘let go’ in your denial statement. For example:

- I now release all fear, all worry, anxiety and mistrust.
- I am now letting go of all hatred, anger and all bitterness.
- There is nothing to fear, for the Power within me is greater than anything that appears to exist in the world.
- There is no lack in the universe, only an *appearance* of lack.

Speak your denials with conviction, *feel* the release happening and let the energy you have been giving to erroneous thoughts fade away.

210 Follow Each Denial With Affirmations

To affirm anything is to assert that it is so. Affirming anything begins the process of making it so even if there is no visible evidence to support it. Affirm that what you are asking for is already coming into form. Use a form of words such as, ‘I now accept . . .’ or ‘I now establish . . .’ The word ‘now’ adds to their immediacy. For example:

- Because I am a manifestation of Spirit, wisdom and power flow through me now. This is the reality.
- I automatically and joyfully focus on the positive.
- Perfect harmony is now established in me. I am at peace.
- As a child of Creative Intelligence it is right for me to have happiness (or love, prosperity, etc.). I claim it. I give thanks for it.

- I resolve to live, love and be happy, whatever happens around me, with reverence and compassions for all.
- I know nothing but love.

Remember, when you refer to yourself in a prayer, you are referring not only to your physical manifestation but also to your Spiritual Self. In a spiritual sense, all the above affirmations are literally true, whatever the appearances.

211 Create Some Affirmations For Yourself

Create some affirmations that will help you at this time. Write them in a small notebook or on a card and carry them around with you. Look at them often and speak them aloud. Here are some examples which you can adapt to suit your own purposes:

- Infinite wisdom is in me; I am guided. I know just what to do.
- I am radiant, vibrant, dynamic and healthy.
- Every moment, I manifest health, happiness, peace and prosperity in my life.
- I have time enough, faith enough, strength enough and enthusiasm enough to do the things that need to be done by me.
- Creative Intelligence comes into my heart and blesses me, my family, my home and my friends.

212 Pray For Others

Include others in your prayers. Affirm the highest blessings for them. Pray that they be spiritually awakened and at peace.

Don't try to force your prayers on anyone. They will accept them when they are ready. Trust that the indwelling Spirit, which knows better than you, will take care of them.

213 Pray With Faith

Prayer works best when the person who prays believes their prayers will be effective.

Develop a deep inner knowing that your prayers will be answered at the right time. Know that whatever you claim in prayer is already yours in Spirit and, because a prayer is a cause set in motion, will become yours in form. Give your words mental and emotional power and let their energy flow through you.

214 Thanksgiving

When you begin, give thanks to CI for the opportunity to pray. When you finish, give thanks for all the blessings that come through prayer. It is right to express gratitude and, moreover, this reinforces the process by which ideas and their benefits will flow in future.

215 The Greatest Prayer

The much-loved prayer attributed to St Francis of Assisi is a perfect example of an effective and energising affirmative prayer. St Francis asked not for problems to be solved, but for CI to work through him to change aspects of himself.

If you hang one prayer on your wall, make it this one. (Change or omit the words 'Lord' and 'Divine Master' if they don't ring true for you.)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

216 How Prayers Are Answered

Many people think prayer is a waste of time because they have tried it, perceived no benefit and given up. Usually this is for one of two reasons. Either they did not listen hard enough for an answer – it was drowned out by mental noise; or their prayers *were* answered but they didn't notice, or it happened in a way they didn't expect.

We don't always know from our limited perspective whether what we are asking for is in our best interests, but CI does. The important thing is to have faith and allow spiritual forces to do the rest. It isn't always apparent that we have been helped until we look back and realise that everything had been exactly as it was supposed to be and turned out for the best.

15 Meditate and be mindful

Would you like to be able to withdraw from the daily hustle and bustle whenever you choose and return feeling calm, centred and in tune with the universal flow? It's perfectly possible. Millions do it every day through meditation. Meditation used to be regarded with suspicion in the West, but nowadays people from all walks of life are discovering the benefits for themselves.

Meditation and prayer are two sides of the same coin. Prayer is talking to our Source; meditation is listening to it. No one can grow in awareness or spiritual power without them because they allow our Higher Selves to assume a progressively greater role in our lives. As the Buddha said, 'Meditate and be mindful, and all else will follow.'

Take daily time for quiet reflection. Focus on the Power within you and let the universe inspire you. Then you can return to your everyday activities renewed. When you're whole and centred on the inside, your life is complete on the outside too.

> *Just as when a lake is still it reflects the surrounding beauty of hill and sky, so also does our mind when perfectly calm reflect the beauty, harmony, perfection and order of the Divine.*
>
> *When we become completely still, our mind becomes attuned to the Infinite Mind, after which nothing else matters.*
>
> *Henry Thomas Hamblin*

217 The Busy Mind Is Like a Muddy Pond

Deep inside us, at our very core, is a place of absolute peace and stillness where we become aware of the loving Presence at the centre of our being. But first we have to clear away the foolish thoughts and emotional fog which obscure it. Thinking too much is like overeating – it brings a kind of mental indigestion which creates needless anxiety and stress.

The busy mind may be compared to a muddy pond. When agitated, mud rises from the bottom, the water becomes cloudy and light barely penetrates beneath the surface. When the pond is still, the mud settles, the sun shines through and the pond becomes visible right to the bottom.

Similarly, when the mind is still, thoughts settle down and Higher Consciousness lights up every nook and cranny. Then we are receptive to an inflow of spiritual energy which uplifts and inspires.

218 What Meditation Is

Meditation means 'to focus one's thoughts' or 'engage in contemplation or reflection'. It differs from guided visualisation, in which a group leader suggests thoughts and mental images for others to follow, usually reading from a script.

Sister Jayanti of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, a respected teacher, defines meditation thus:

> *Meditation is the gathering of self-knowledge, the pathway back to inner peace, the restoration of love for yourself, rediscovering that place of eternal, unchanging stillness within, and reaching the highest level of conscious awareness.*

219 The Purpose of Meditation

The purpose of meditation is to cultivate inner peace and find the spiritual guidance available to us from within.

There's a Buddhist parable about a young musk deer that becomes aware of a beautiful aroma. He searches the earth for its source without success, only to find it emanating from within its own body.

Similarly, when you go within, you become aware of the Presence and are enriched by the wisdom and power it can bring. As your experience of meditation grows, rays of truth flow through you like radio waves passing through the walls of a building.

> *Every living being possesses the seeds of enlightenment. Living beings do not need to seek it outside of themselves because all the wisdom and strength of the universe is already present within them.*
>
> *The Buddha*

220 Benefits of Meditation

The benefits of meditation are available to anyone who genuinely practises with an open mind. Meditation:

- rejuvenates the body, releases tension and improves sleep and vitality;
- improves concentration;
- brings freedom from anxiety, fear, guilt, anger and other harmful emotions;
- makes us more accepting, tolerant, forgiving and loving towards others;

- puts us in touch with our true purpose;
- brings greater awareness of self and others;
- heightens intuition and creativity;
- keeps us centred in the here and now;
- allows us to detach ourselves from emotions and thoughts and observe them as if happening to someone else;
- brings a feeling of connectedness with all things.

221 Mindfulness

Mindfulness is closely related to meditation. Mindfulness is paying attention to what you are doing and your thoughts and feelings right now. When you practise mindfulness, everyday activities become more meaningful and enjoyable – even eating a chocolate is more pleasurable when you give it your full attention. Being present helps us slow down, accept what is happening and appreciate ourselves and the world around us. We're often so busy 'doing' that we don't have time to 'be'.

In his book *Zen in the Art of Archery*, Eugen Herrigel describes how an archer shooting with mindfulness becomes one with the bow and hits the centre of the target with every arrow. If you ask how he did it, he can't put it into words. The same also applies to sports such as tennis and golf. Worry about your game and you'll make mistakes, but if you master the core skills and then allow mindfulness to take over, you enter a state known as 'the zone'. This is how champions perform at their peak.

Mindfulness is powerful. When you concentrate any form of energy, including mental and emotional energy, you intensify it. Pay full attention to what you are doing in each moment. If your mind wanders, slow your breathing and bring it back. After a while it becomes so automatic you don't even have to think about it.

222 Mindfulness Exercise

Choose *one* activity to do today with total mindfulness. Slow down and take your time. If your mind wanders, simply bring it back. For example, when you're sitting, be aware of the chair beneath you and how it feels to be supported by it; when driving, listen to the sound of the engine as you accelerate, decelerate and change gear; when eating notice how your jaw moves, the feeling of biting into your food and the combination of flavours.

In addition, pay attention to the sights, sounds and sensations (inner and outer) as you:

- wash/shave
- walk
- listen to music
- do the gardening
- wash up
- wait at traffic lights or in a traffic jam.

What have you learned from this exercise?

223 You Are Already a Meditator

We all have quiet moments when we go inside and reflect. Have you ever drifted off during a long journey, or when relaxing in a garden or on a beach? Have you ever joined in a period of silence to commemorate significant people or events? If so, you were meditating. What did you think about? How did it feel during the period and afterwards?

Meditation is easy. It's as simple as sitting comfortably, closing your eyes and breathing slowly. If this sounds too arduous, don't worry – it gets easier with practice. The next few pages offer advice and examples.

224 Learn To Enjoy Silence

We live in a noisy world. Most of us cannot escape from traffic, piped music, televisions and radios (ours and other people's), advertising, car stereos and so on.

People who deliberately seek silence and solitude are often ridiculed. To the spiritual seeker, though, silence is not only welcome, but essential because silence is the medium through which CI expresses. In silence and stillness, the mind vibrates with Source energy like a radio receiving signals from a powerful transmitter.

You certainly don't have to be a recluse – just find a little time each day to step back from the hurly-burly and do your inner work.

225 When To Meditate

The best times to meditate are first thing in the morning and during the evening. Start with short periods of 10–15 minutes. Gradually increase this to 20–30 minutes per session, or longer if you feel at ease.

Practise daily. If you're pressed for time, do less rather than none at all. Regular short meditations are more beneficial than infrequent long sessions.

Never meditate if you are tired, hungry or stressed or after a large meal or alcohol.

226 Where To Meditate

With practice, it's possible to meditate anywhere, but ideally, find a place where you will be undisturbed, unplug the telephone, switch off your mobile and ask your friends and family to leave you alone. The fewer distractions, the better.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and remove spectacles and tight-fitting jewellery. Have with you anything which calms you – candles, flowers, icons, etc. Use meditation music and incense if they help. You can use meditation CDs or tapes if you like, but they are not strictly necessary.

Sit upright with spine erect. If using a chair, place your hands in your lap or on the arms of the chair; alternatively, sit cross-legged on the floor with your hands in your lap.

227 Choose a Method That Suits You

There are hundreds of types of meditation. Start with a few that appeal to you. Once you've mastered these, you may like to try others.

The following are the most common:

- Vipassna: the classic Buddhist mediation. Focus on the breath. Slowly count down from 10 to 1 with each exhalation or just observe the breath.
- Mantra meditation: mentally repeat a word or phrase that carries a spiritual idea, such as 'peace', 'one', 'calm', 'ohm' and so on. Some schools give (or sell) their students a 'sacred' sound, usually a Sanskrit word or phrase.

➢ Object meditation: focus your gaze on an object such as a candle, picture, flower or even a spot on the wall. Alternatively, close your eyes and focus on an imaginary object.

228 The Procedure

1. When in place, affirm that you are safe, relaxed and peaceful, then take your attention to your breathing. Don't try to change it – just be aware of it. Imagine you are breathing in Creative Intelligence and connecting to your Inner Power.
2. Maintain a passive attitude. Don't try to stop thinking, just watch your thoughts and stay detached. Whenever your mind wanders off, gently bring it back. Gradually your thoughts will slow down and you will begin to feel more peaceful.
3. Choose a type of meditation from the above list or the next few pages.
4. Finish by opening your eyes and gently bringing your awareness back to your surroundings. When ready, get up and ease yourself back into the business of the day.

229 The Benson Method

The late Dr Herbert Benson was a leading authority on relaxation and meditation. He developed a method for general use:

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
2. Relax all your muscles, starting with your feet and moving progressively to your head and face. Keep them relaxed throughout the meditation.
3. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe naturally through your nose. As you breathe out, silently and mentally say the word 'One'. Breathe in. Breathe out – say 'one'. Breathe in. Breathe out – say 'one' – and so on.

4. If your mind wanders, bring it back; it is not necessary to empty the mind of all thought. Stay centred, calm and peaceful. Don't worry about whether you are achieving a deep level of relaxation; just maintain a passive attitude and let the release happen at its own pace.
5. Continue for 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm.
6. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes with your eyes closed, then open them and sit for a few minutes more. Take a few deep breaths and resume normal activity.

230 The Hong-Sau Method

The Hong-Sau Technique of Calming and Concentration was taught by the Indian Master, Paramahansa Yogananda. Practise for 20–30 minutes per session.

1. Close or half close your eyes.
2. Focus your gaze on the Third Eye (between the eyebrows).
3. Mentally watch the breath entering and leaving.
4. With each in-breath, mentally chant 'Hong' and move the index finger of your dominant hand towards the palm.
5. With each out-breath, mentally chant 'Sau' and move the index finger away from the palm.

231 Visualise The Light

During your meditation, imagine that you are cocooned in pure white light, which radiates from you and lights up the whole world. Imagine the light bringing peace, love and healing to all.

Imagine you are like a luminous star, shimmering with light. Connect with rays of light from every other star. Meditate on these rays of light flowing through the entire universe.

232 The Ancient Standing Stone

This is a powerful guided visualisation. Sit comfortably, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes and relax. Imagine your arms, legs and whole body are becoming heavier, as if the forces of gravity are getting stronger and pulling you down into the chair.

Imagine you are a standing stone, alone on the top of a hill, put there centuries ago by a long-forgotten tribe. Be aware of the stillness which fills the centre of your being while everything around is constantly changing. Watch passively as day follows night and the seasons come and go, year after year, century after century. Don't criticise or judge, just observe with detachment. Feel the silence and stillness within. Take your awareness inside and rest there awhile.

Imagine now a bright light above, drawing you upwards, its rays flowing through you as if you are becoming a part of this light. Rest completely in its protection, allowing it to care for you according to your needs.

Quietly affirm: 'I am Spirit, perfect, harmonious and whole. There is nothing to fear and nothing can hurt me, for Spirit cannot be hurt or afraid' (or choose any affirmation you wish).

When you are ready, gently bring yourself back to normal waking consciousness.

233 Love and Forgiveness Meditation

This is a simple version of a traditional Buddhist meditation. Once relaxed, imagine a swathe of pure white light encircling you, accepting you fully as you are. Then:

1. Allow a feeling of love and compassion for yourself to spread throughout your body. Repeat, 'I love, accept and approve of myself. I am a being of Spirit, worthy of all the good in my life.' Do this for 3–4 minutes.
2. Now let your love radiate to a close friend. Hold this person in your heart and feel the love you have for yourself spreading to them. Imagine the light encircling you both. Repeat, 'I freely offer you my love. I wish you all the good you desire.' Do this for 3– 4 minutes.
3. In the third phase, direct your love towards someone for whom your feelings are neutral. Hold them in your heart and let your unconditional love flow towards them. Imagine the light encircling you both. Repeat, 'I freely offer you my love. I wish you all the good you desire.' Do this for 3–4 minutes.
4. In the fourth phase, send love and forgiveness to someone you do not like or who is antagonistic towards you. Hold them in your heart and let love and forgiveness flow towards them. Imagine the light encircling you both. Repeat, 'I offer you my unconditional love. I wish you all the good you desire.'
5. Now visualise all four people, including yourself, and send them love. Imagine pure white light encircling and accepting all of you completely. Feel such love and compassion towards all four that if you were asked to choose one in preference to the others, you would not be able to do so. Repeat, 'I offer unconditional love and approval to all. I wish everyone all the good they desire.'

When you finish, sit quietly for a few minutes, then open your eyes, take a few deep breaths and ease yourself back into normal activity.

234 The 'Figure At The Spring' Meditation

This classic meditation helps you find a way forward when you are uncertain.

Enter the meditative state. Visualise some stone steps leading down to a spring. As you descend the steps, count down from ten to one to deepen your state. As you near the bottom, notice a figure waiting for you. This could be a prophet, wise being, goddess, monk, an angel – you choose.

Tell this figure about your situation and your feelings about it. Then listen and wait for an answer. Finish by sitting quietly for several minutes before easing yourself back into normal activity.

It is not unusual to get an answer during the meditation, but it is more likely to come to you during the following days.

(The figure at the spring is, of course, a symbol of your Superconscious Mind.)

235 The Meditation Experience

You may find your first few meditations frustrating because the mind is easily distracted. Don't worry, a wandering mind is part of the process.

At first you will probably experience much the same state of mind in meditation as you do in life generally. If, for example, you are prone to anxiety, your early meditations may not be pleasant, but keep going. With practice it gets easier and inner conflicts are resolved in due course.

Don't expect every meditation to be the same nor progress to be smooth. All meditators, however well practised, find that some sessions are better than others and go through periods when they appear to make little progress. This is quite normal: they don't give up and neither should you.

236 Walking Meditation

Meditation need not be just a stationary activity – you can meditate when you're moving (if it is safe to do so). For example, you can meditate when walking, swimming, jogging, dancing or practising yoga, tai chi and so on.

To practise walking meditation, concentrate totally on the act of walking. Feel your feet making contact with the ground, your muscles expanding and contracting, the movement of your legs and the air against your skin. Concentration is the key. How do you feel? How calm is your mind?

237 Mini Meditations

Mini meditations are very beneficial. Whenever you wish, stop what you are doing for a few moments, close your eyes, slow your breathing and still your thoughts. Remind yourself of your connection with your Source and invite CI to be your guide.

238 Go On a Retreat

Retreats are a chance to reflect, pray, meditate and rest. They are an excellent way of recharging your batteries.

Many organisations offer retreats. There are weekend retreats, week-long retreats, month-long and even longer. You can stay near home or travel abroad.

If you are unsure where to look, try the Internet. When I entered 'retreats UK' into a search engine, nearly a million references came up!

239 Spend Time In Nature

There's nothing like spending time in nature to feel at one with the universe and feel the higher energies flowing through you. You have so many choices, such as gardening, visiting places of natural beauty, walking along the seashore at sunset, in forests, along the riverbank and so on.

See Creative Intelligence in everything. Recognise that the natural features such as trees, rock and plants are aware of your presence and watch you pass by and feel the love that sustains everything flowing through you.

240 Visit Sacred Places

Sacred places have energies of their own which transcend religious differences and affect those who visit. You don't have to travel far. Every country has such places, including churches, mosques and temples, ancient sites (such as standing stones and natural features) etc.

241 The Warlord and The Monk (an old Buddhist story)

A powerful warlord was overseeing the sacking of a monastery when he discovered a monk meditating peacefully amid the mayhem.

'Do you know who I am?' thundered the warlord. The monk remained silent. 'I am a man who can kill you with this sword without batting an eyelid,' he bellowed.

The monk quietly replied, 'I am one who can be killed by that sword without batting an eyelid.'

The warlord, realising his defeat, smiled, bowed and left.

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower.
Hold infinity on the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.

William Blake

16 Inspiration and Insight

The average human mind has powers far greater than those most of us imagine. That's because it extends beyond our physical boundaries into the energy field that surrounds us, connecting with other minds and linking with the Intelligence that regulates the universe.

Among the amazing capabilities of the mind that have been verified scientifically are its ability to seemingly pluck ideas out of the air, 'know' something without any concrete evidence, solve complicated problems without any specialist training, including in our sleep, send and receive messages from others (both in bodily form and in spirit), and recall events and circumstances apparently from past lives. All these are functions of the Superconscious Mind.

Taking the Internet as an analogy, the conscious mind is the operator of a PC, the subconscious the library of files stored on the computer, and the Superconscious the service provider. You are connected through cyberspace to a limitless source of knowledge and inspiration unrestricted by the five senses. It includes everything that existed in the past, exists in the present and will exist in the future.

Superconscious inspiration and insight have been available to you since the day you were born. If you've never been aware of them, it's either because you don't recognise them or you're not properly tuned in. Listen carefully. Every moment, Creative Intelligence offers you spiritual guidance that you would be unwise to ignore.

> *Man's body is faulty, his mind untrustworthy, but his imagination has made him remarkable.*
>
> *John Masefield*

242 The Superconscious Challenges Scientific Analysis

Superconscious insight is often dismissed as bogus by neuroscientists because it cannot be explained by the workings of the brain alone. However, the evidence is overwhelming. The psychic Uri Geller is only one of many to be investigated under rigorous conditions and has repeatedly proved his ability to communicate telepathically and project energy over huge distances. Nevertheless because the investigators have found no *material* explanation, he is frequently portrayed, unfairly, as a trickster.

243 Superconscious Abilities

We are a long way from understanding all the powers of the Superconscious, but we do know that they include the following:

- an ability to 'know' and to 'connect' that does not rely on knowledge and past learning;
- intuitive insight and decision-making;
- heightened creativity and inspiration;
- the ability to stand back and observe, reflect and detach from our thoughts and emotions;
- telepathy – the ability to communicate unaided at a distance;

- synchronicity – the ability to perceive, interpret and be guided by linked events and coincidences.

244 How Do You Make Use of Your Superconscious?

Write down everything you experience beyond the five senses – hunches, ideas, mental images, feelings, dreams and so on. For instance:

- Do you instinctively know when something is going to work or not?
- Have you ever felt an overwhelming urge to do something without being able to justify it logically? Did you follow it? What happened?
- Have you ever backed away from a course of action that seemed logical at the time, only to discover later that it would have spelled disaster? What happened? How did you feel?
- Do you ever wake up with a good idea, or the answer to a problem that has been bothering you? Give an example.
- Have you ever had a 'psychic' experience? What happened?
- Do you ever feel that life is trying to steer you? In what way?

Our Superconscious abilities are a natural part of us. The more we use them, the more reliable they become.

245 Imagination

A good imagination is not just the preserve of children and artists, it is available to everyone. Imagination is defined as the faculty by which we

formulate ideas about things that are not present or have not been directly experienced. It is how we innovate: everything ever created first had to be imagined.

Imagination involves all five senses. We imagine by means of pictures, sounds, touch, taste and smell, or a combination. The more vivid and lasting these thought-images and sense-impressions, the more powerful they are.

Imagination can be a friend or foe. It can begin the process by which our highest good becomes reality, or it can lead us into the opposite. When we use our imagination wisely, it is a vehicle for positive change. Contemplate yourself surrounded by the conditions you wish to create in your life. Do it often. There are always better things ahead for those who focus their minds on a bright future.

246 Two Types of Imagination

There are two forms of imagination. The first rearranges existing ideas, concepts and memories into new combinations. For example, we can bring the past to mind in any combination of the five senses but are not creating anything new. We can also imagine how things might have turned out if things had been somehow different.

The second is creative. It envisages things that never existed (past, present or future). Try this: close your eyes. Imagine an elephant. (Presumably there is no elephant in front of you at this moment!) ‘See’ it as clearly as you can. If you are able to do this, the first type of imagination is engaged.

Now imagine a *pink* elephant wearing a tuxedo. How clearly can you ‘see’ it? If you are able to do this, your *creative imagination* is at work since there is not and never can be a real pink elephant, let alone one dressed this way.

247 Awaken Your Imagination

Everyone can awaken their imagination. For example:

- Tell stories, the more far-fetched the better. Write them down.
- When you read stories or hear of real events, try to picture them in your mind's eye.
- Take an everyday object and ask yourself how it could be improved. Imagine what would happen if it were made shorter, longer, thicker, or was packaged differently or grouped with something else.
- Use cartoons or mind maps rather than lists. Make them colourful and inventive.
- Imagine how you might make your home or office more pleasant, your work more fun, useful and productive.

Improving your creative imagination cannot help but have a transformational effect on your life.

248 Envision Your Future – a Powerful Exercise

Take a few moments to relax and envisage the perfect life for yourself three years from now.

Create a mental screen inside your forehead, just above eye level. Project onto your mental screen images of your perfect life. Imagine being what you aspire to be, your dreams becoming reality and bringing you happiness. Experience it with all your senses. 'Hear' the sounds and 'sense' the feelings and atmospheres. What are you doing? Who's with you? How do you feel? What do you smell and taste?

If any limiting thoughts or images creep in, let them go. If they refuse to go away, acknowledge them, terminate the session and return to it five or ten minutes later.

249 Dreams

We communicate with our inner psyche in our sleep, through dreams, when the waking mind shuts down. It is a good idea to keep a 'dream diary' since dreams reveal our deepest thoughts and offer intuitive guidance.

In your dream diary write down any dreams you remember and how you felt about them. Draw pictures and diagrams if this helps. Then write down what the dream means to you. For example, years ago I had a recurring dream about my camper van rusting away. A professional explained to me that this signified anxiety over losing the job I held at the time, which gave me long summer holidays in which I could go travelling.

Look at your notes and drawings and reflect on them from time to time.

250 Daydreaming

Next time you catch yourself daydreaming, don't feel guilty – enjoy it. Daydreaming is good for you. The brain has a kind of 'screensaver' that automatically kicks in when the mind is idling. If our activities and surroundings are not sufficiently stimulating to maintain our interest, we get lost in our imagination.

Daydreaming can sometimes result in useful ideas and is a perfectly healthy response to boring or routine activities.

251 Intuition = 'Inner Tuition'

Intuition – the sixth sense – is not a special ability restricted to a few. It is heightened awareness that everyone is capable of nurturing. It is the ability to come to correct conclusions from limited data, without resorting to memory, analysis or deductive logic. It has been described as 'compressed intelligence'.

Humans are not the only creatures to have a sixth sense. Animals have it too, although we tend to call this 'instinct'. For instance, we cannot explain the incredible navigational abilities of racing pigeons, migrating birds, fish and insects, or how pets appear to know when their owners are on their way home.

We use our sixth sense long before our reasoning minds develop. We experience it in many ways, such as a gentle feeling nudging us in the right direction, or a quiet, comforting voice. We ignore it at our peril, because it is nothing less than our Superconscious transmitting insight and guidance to us from CI.

When we ignore our intuition, it is usually because unhelpful beliefs get in the way, or the intellect kicks in, or we lack the courage to follow it through.

Reflect on what, if anything, stops you following your inner guidance. Do you trust it? If not, why not?

252 Body Intuition

Every cell in our bodies has energy and intelligence. We constantly use our energy field to subconsciously scan other people's energy and the environment for danger. We may be alerted by a physical feeling, such as a tightening of the neck and shoulder muscles or queasiness in the stomach. When this happens, our body's intelligence is trying to keep us safe.

Make better use of this facility by taking your attention to the area around your solar plexus (this is where most of us feel it), and asking a question such as, 'Is this right for me?' An uncomfortable feeling or general sense of unease could be your intuition urging you to back off, slow down or delay making a decision.

If you doubt the wisdom in the cells of your body, try this: clasp your hands together and ask a question – is this true or false? – and try to pull them apart. The harder it is to pull them apart, the more likely it is to be true. Give yourself these suggestions and see what happens:

1. It is good for my body to eat lots of rich, sugary, fatty foods.
2. It is good for my body to eat lots of fresh fruit, salads and vegetables.

253 Superconscious Intuition

Superconscious intuition surpasses body intuition because it acts as a channel for ideas and inspiration flowing from CI. These are always relevant, timely and helpful, although you may not have the luxury of knowing it at the time.

Make a decision to listen more carefully to your inner voice and act upon it. In doing so, you are allowing the universe to guide you and trusting in the very Intelligence that created you.

254 Quieten the Intellect

To tune in to the Superconscious, go within and quieten the inner chatter. The biggest obstacle is the intellect because it demands evidence which can be verified by the five senses. You can move beyond this limiting state of mind by dropping the need to think everything through logically. If this is difficult for you:

- Cease needing to know and explain everything.
- Stop analysing and see things more holistically.
- Stop naming, counting and labelling everything. For example, when you go to the country, don't try to name the trees, birds and flowers: just look, breathe deeply, take it all in and enjoy being there.
- Read fewer newspapers and magazines – do you really need to know all that?
- Access only TV and radio programmes that really interest you.
- Make more time for quiet reflection and prayer.

255 'Lower'and 'Higher' Intuition

Intuition enhances every aspect of our lives. It can help us better meet basic needs such as safety, physiological, belonging and ego needs; it can help us

to get what we want and raise our status. Intuition used for these purposes may be termed ‘lower intuition’.

Intuition can also help us to find our life purpose, build self-esteem and find fulfilment and self-actualisation. This is ‘higher intuition’.

Students of psychology may recognise Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Motivation in the above. Maslow believed we must meet our ‘lower’ needs before tackling the ‘higher’ needs. In other words, we only turn our attention to using our creativity, appreciating truth and beauty and experiencing our spirituality once the lower needs have been met, *but this is not always true*. Many have turned their back on worldly desires to seek spiritual fulfilment, embracing ‘higher’ intuition along the way.

256 Intuition or Emotion?

Intuition and emotion both work through the body and sometimes feel the same, but they are very different in nature. How do we recognise one from the other?

Emotional responses are learned and by adulthood are usually ingrained. But they may not be reliable. Intuition, on the other hand can always be depended upon. For example, some people are afraid of spiders. Is this a warning of danger from their intuition? Probably not. Most house spiders are harmless to human beings, so it is more likely to be an irrational fear programmed into them as children.

The key to making this distinction is self-awareness. If you are aware of your programming, you are more able to distinguish between an intuitive feeling and an emotional one.

Here are more clues:

- The first feeling is the most reliable. Intuition is felt in the body before the cognitive apparatus clicks into gear and produces a conditioned response.
- Intuition is subtle. It's like the triangle in an orchestra, drowned out when the other instruments are in full swing, but unmistakable when they go quiet. There it is – 'ding'. Doesn't it sound good?
- The stronger the feeling of contentment, the more likely it is to be a genuine intuition.

257 Inspiration

We receive inspiration from two main sources. The first is self-contained. It consists of creative thinking, remembering and 'body intelligence'. For example, because the memory of how to do it is imprinted in their consciousness, skilled mechanics know straight away why an engine won't start and professional musicians can tune in to a piece of music and play along without necessarily rehearsing.

We also receive inspiration from without. Spiritual gifts come to us in the form of ideas. Many geniuses believed that they were tuning in to a higher form of consciousness. Einstein, Louis Pasteur, Edison, Alexander Fleming, Mozart and Ludwig Van Beethoven believed they were tapping into a source of inspiration beyond their own minds and were merely a channel through which ideas flowed. The Prophet Mohammed was illiterate, yet he made profound statements about science and the natural world that turned out to be amazingly accurate.

Where did this come from? 'It cannot be done by willpower,' said the composer Johannes Brahms when asked from where his inspiration came. 'When I feel the urge to compose, I begin by appealing directly to my maker. I immediately feel vibrations that thrill my whole being. In this exalted

state, I see clearly what is obscure in my ordinary moods, then I feel capable of drawing inspiration from above.'

258 You Are a Channel

You are no less a channel for CI than Edison, Brahms and the rest – we all are. All the knowledge that ever was or will be already exists. We think we are expanding the boundaries of knowledge, but this is untrue – the knowledge is already there. We simply find out what has always been. The means of sending radio signals, e-mails and text messages, travelling by air, generating nuclear power and carrying out organ transplants existed before humans discovered them. We didn't *create* the knowledge, we *uncovered* it.

To be the best channel you can, you must allow the inspiration to flow through you. Are you resisting by refusing to believe you have this power? Are you throttling it by frantic activity and over-intellectualising? Enter the silence through prayer and meditation, then you are ready to receive spiritual ideas, inspiration and everything you need to fulfil your purpose.

259 How To Stimulate Creative Thinking

When we feel inspired, our minds transcend their previous limitations, our energy levels burgeon and ideas flow. To enter this marvellous state, access your Superconscious:

1. Be calm and still. Silence the mental chatter. Only then can you go beyond your conscious mind and commune with your inner wisdom.
2. Be clear on what you want and open to imaginative ideas. Ask for guidance, then mentally step aside.

3. Be patient. The Superconscious cannot be hurried. It continues to work at its own pace when you've turned your attention to other things. Often a fully formed solution presents itself.

260 Problem-Solving

A similar approach can be used for solving intractable problems. Simply ask your Superconscious a question, preferably when in a relaxed state. *Believe* you'll be given the right answer. You'll know, because you'll feel it throughout your body.

The best questions are those which presuppose a favourable outcome, such as:

- What's the best solution to this problem?
- What can I do next?
- What can I learn from this?
- What else can I do that I haven't already thought of?

The answer may come at any time or when you least expect, in a dream, a chance remark or when chilled out. Be sure to act on it. If you don't like the answer and ignore it, you'll only make the problem worse!

261 Sleep On It

There's plenty of evidence that the sleeping mind solves problems more efficiently than the waking mind. Most of Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde* was dreamed, as was the second half of Richard Bach's best-seller *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull* (the first part had been gathering dust on his shelf for eight years). Elias Howe was given the means of perfecting the sewing machine in a dream, and Alfred Russel Wallace, a nineteenth-century

naturalist, had a similar experience. He was in bed with a fever when he dreamed a theory of natural selection. He wrote to Charles Darwin, who borrowed the idea and published *The Origin of Species* soon after.

You can use this information for your benefit. Write down the problem and read it through just before you go to sleep. Ask your Superconscious to work on it for you during the night. Keep a pen and pad at your bedside and, if an idea comes, write it down immediately. Many good ideas are lost if they are not recorded straight away.

262 Try It Out

Geniuses stand out not just because they have brilliant ideas, but because they do something with them. Have you ever had a good idea and done nothing about it, only to discover subsequently that someone else thought of it too and made it a success? They trusted their inner guidance and acted on it – you didn't!

Genius, as Albert Einstein said, is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. Brahms concurred. 'I wish to impress on you that my compositions are not the fruits of inspiration alone,' he said, 'but also severe, painstaking toil.' Many outstanding ideas come to nothing because they are not acted upon.

263 Telepathy

Telepathy is Superconscious communication. Messages are passed from one person to another through no *visible* or *scientifically explicable* channel. Mental fields extend around brains just as the fields of transmission extend around mobile phones. Some individuals are able to extend their mental fields over huge distances and make contact with others' mental fields.

The following experiment usually succeeds far more often than would be expected by sheer chance. Ask a friend to help you. Write a word or number on a piece of paper and seal it in an envelope without letting your friend know the contents.

Sit together facing away from each other in a darkened room, eyes closed and relaxed. Imagine you are transmitting the contents of the envelope to your friend. Concentrate all your mental energy on it. Ask your friend to concentrate on visualising or sensing what's on the paper. After five or ten minutes, ask them to tell you what they 'saw'. Often the first thing that comes into their mind will be correct.

Do this on a regular basis over a period of several months, increasing the complexity of the material to include simple pictures, photographs or diagrams. You will be astonished at the results.

264 Mediumship and Clairvoyance

Mediums claim to communicate with the dead. Some of the messages they convey, apparently from people who have passed on, are astonishing. But do these messages really come from the dead or is it trickery? Do they get the client to reveal things about themselves through finely tuned observation and clever questioning then feed it back, as some would argue?

I believe it's neither of these. Our minds reach out and affect each other *at an energy level* over time and distance. Somehow psychics are able to tune in to these mental energy fields. The totality of mental energy is not confined to the minds of people currently in a body, nor is it restricted by our notion of time, because in the quantum field, *time can flow both forwards and backwards.*

Mediums try to interpret the ideas and impressions they receive in terms we can understand. We tend to project our limited understanding onto things and give them shape according to our beliefs and perceptual framework. It's

much easier to visualise a person who has passed on as if they were still in their human form than to visualise a tiny fragment of an energy field!

> *To hear the dead you have to listen very carefully. It comes as only a whisper in the air, but they're shouting as loud as they can.*
>
> *Jonathan Cainer*

265 Trust Your Superconscious

Surveys reveal that more than half of us believe in tarot cards and palmistry, and nearly half in mind reading. Sales of pendulums, dowsing rods, crystals and other New Age paraphernalia have rocketed in recent years, and most of us think we know someone who is psychic. There is nothing wrong with any of this, as long as we remember that the props themselves are unimportant. They are merely tools which help some access their Superconscious.

We all have access to the universal energy field, but some have learned to make better contact than others. Seek help from them from time to time by all means, but don't hand responsibility for your life over to someone else. Instead, develop your own Superconscious powers. You can strengthen them just as you would build strength into your body through exercise, and when you place your trust in them, they never let you down.

266 Synchronicity

Synchronicity is a term which describes what happens when two or more favourable events come together apparently by coincidence. But is there such a thing as a coincidence?

On a spiritual level, no. In the grand scheme of things, everything is designed to help us to grow – it's how life has been set up. Everyone knows superconsciously what they need to learn. Synchronicity occurs when two or more superconscious minds conspire to bring people together to create meaningful learning experiences.

Synchronicity can't be dismissed because it happens so often. We've all heard of people who got timely help from a stranger or find the answer to a nagging problem in a magazine by chance, and don't we all look back on painful experiences and realise they had a deeper meaning for us?

Synchronicity happens; there are no accidents or coincidences because everything is governed by universal law. Raising our awareness of it strengthens our intuition and speeds our spiritual progress in many helpful ways.

Think of 'coincidences' you've experienced. Looking back, what did you learn? Was some unseen force helping you?

267 Spiritual Vision

Spiritual vision enables us to look beyond appearances and see Spirit working in all things.

A hundred years ago, spiritual vision led to the creation of a very special community in a quiet corner of Devon. For over three hundred years, Buckfast Abbey was nothing more than a heap of stones, having been virtually destroyed in the sixteenth century. Then, in 1882, the landowner decided to offer the site to a small group of French monks.

With nothing more than a vision and a faded print of the original building, the monks drew up plans to restore the abbey to its former glories. 'You will

smile,' wrote the Abbot to a friend, 'but you know that I am only thirty. In another thirty years time, I shall not be so very old, and during all that time I shall apply myself to this task without ceasing. Given time and patience one might construct a world.'

Although the monks had only £5 between them and the loan of a horse and cart, work on the new church commenced in 1907. Only one of the monks had any prior experience as a stonemason. Local supporters donated the bells, stained glass, font, lighting and furnishings. Meanwhile, the monks grew vegetables, kept bees, pigs and dairy cattle, and sold the famous Buckfast Tonic Wine to raise funds.

The scaffolding was finally removed in December 1938. 'All that you see here is truly the fruit of faith,' said the Abbot in his inaugural address. 'We have had no other talent except the talent and genius of faith.' Three weeks later, he died.

Anyone who visits this beautiful place cannot help but marvel at their achievement, a testament to spiritual vision, faith, determination and the creative energy that flows through and from our spiritual core.

268 Listen To Teacher

Once the Superconscious is awakened, it cannot be silenced. It is like a wise teacher, always on hand to offer guidance and support.

Life is a school and we're always in the right class for us because the Inner Teacher (Higher Self) places us in situations from which we can learn. Difficulties and obstacles indicate a refusal to give up beliefs and behaviours that no longer serve us, or a failure to grasp their significance. If we don't get the point first time, our inner teacher ensures we attract plenty of opportunities to get it right in the future.

To the uninitiated, these are nothing more than chance events, but once

we’re aware of synchronicity working in our lives we know they have a purpose. We look for the messages and reflect on them.

When we’ve learned a lesson, the difficulties and obstacles melt away, we experience a warm inner glow and move on. This is the Inner Teacher’s way of saying, ‘well done’ and moving us on to the next level.

Theme 5

Knowing Is Not Enough: Spirituality Must Be *Lived*

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17 Spirituality in action

Spiritual awareness is not just about explaining the nature of reality and our place in it – its main value is in knowing how to live. First the spiritual life must be wanted, thought about, dreamed of and believed in. Then it must be lived.

Once we realise that everything we need lies within us, we set to work to remove the mental blockages and let Creative Intelligence flow through us. Then our Higher Selves assume a progressively greater role in our lives and we can create the kinds of experiences we want.

As we raise our awareness, we understand that thought and action are two sides of the same coin. Merely thinking something is a cause set in motion. Thought precedes action, and action stimulates and reinforces thought. Over time we notice thought and action merging into each other.

We learn from our actions through reflection. Even unwise actions can lead to reflection. We adjust our thinking, change our actions and get it right next time. Right thinking and right action always produces right results. They have to – it's the Law.

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

John Wesley

269 I-T-I-A and Intention

The formula for meaningful and lasting change, the I-T-I-A Formula©, has five elements. Four of these – self-awareness, intention, thinking and imagination – exist only in the mind. The fifth – action – is physical.

Personal change begins with intention. An intention is a strong desire held in the mind and acted upon. Ask yourself:

- How badly do you want to live at a higher level of consciousness?
- Are you prepared to commit yourself?
- Are you willing to drop old habits and have faith in the Laws of Cause and Effect and Attraction?
- Are you willing to let go of anything that denies a richer life to you, such as blame, self-pity and fear?
- There will be periods when you appear to be making little progress – do you have the staying power?
- There will be setbacks – are you willing to do whatever it takes?

If you have answered 'yes' to all these questions, go for it! What you seek from the heart, you shall find.

270 I-T-I-A and Action

Spiritual awareness is not an escape from the world; it does not exempt us from working and earning a living. It does, however, make it easier to do what we must because we approach it from a different perspective. We turn every moment into an opportunity for happiness and peace.

Firstly, we go about our activities with mindfulness and a positive attitude, aware of the truth in the Buddhist proverb, 'Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.'

Secondly, we become proactive. We don't sit around waiting for something to happen – we lay down the spiritual causes that make it happen. CI will only do for us what we do for ourselves. When we do the right things with the right consciousness, all the power of the universe comes to our aid. As Prophet Mohammed said, 'Take a step toward God and God will take a thousand steps toward you.'

271 The As If Principle

The As If Principle states that when we act 'as if' we are already becoming what we wish to, that's what we become. There are two aspects:

1. Focus your mind on what you want and act as if it is *already happening for you.* Take the initiative. Set challenging goals and try a new way of being. If it feels uncomfortable, it is only your conditioned mind trying to assert itself so ignore it and do it anyway. The discomfort drops away as the new thinking and behaviours become routine.
2. Act as if the power of the universe is with you, rooting for your success. It's true anyway, and it changes your entire approach to life. You feel confident, guided and supported by your Higher Self. The more you rely on it, the more it reveals itself to you.

Live with the consciousness that CI is there for you, and life is set up for your benefit. Everything is in order and in spiritual terms *always* works out for the best.

272 Serving Others

We simply can't fulfil ourselves without being of service to others. 'One thing I know is that those who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve,' wrote Dr Albert Schweitzer, the great humanitarian and Nobel Peace Prize winner. As Maurice Tester wrote in his book *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*:

> *There are two ingredients essential to the full life. Every great philosopher has reached the same conclusion. You may disguise them under different labels. You may decide what I write is trite or banal. But the indisputable facts are that no-one can live a full life without the magic ingredients of love and service.*

We're here to give, and life presents us with continuous opportunities to give more. Take every opportunity to make the world a better place for everyone you meet – and others outside your immediate circle.

273 Feed People

One simple way to serve is to feed people (animals, fish and birds too). Silently bless the food and give thanks.

Feeding others is not just about easing hunger: it is an expression of caring and acceptance. Sharing food symbolises prosperity and encourages social bonding. There are other forms of nourishment too, such as appreciation, encouragement, attention and affection. As Mother Teresa said, 'The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.'

A famous Buddhist painting shows two scenes depicting heaven and hell. One shows people seated at a magnificent banquet holding spoons with

handles so long they cannot reach their mouths. This is hell. The other scene shows people sitting at the same banquet using the same long-handled spoons, but they are feeding each other. This is heaven.

274 Lessons From Candles

'How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world,' wrote William Shakespeare.

'You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before all that they may see your good works,' said Jesus of Nazareth to his disciples.

And you? Be a shining light to everyone you encounter and remember that *a candle loses nothing when it is used to light another one*.

275 Spontaneous Acts of Kindness

I recently witnessed a kind act in my local supermarket. An elderly lady didn't have enough money to pay for her groceries. She was trying to decide which goods to leave behind when a man in the queue behind pulled out his wallet and paid the difference. No doubt it was only a small amount to him, but it mattered a great deal to the woman.

You can perform a random act of kindness for anyone, anytime, anywhere. Pay for someone else's meal, carry their bag, let them go before you in a queue. A single thoughtful act can change lives. 'You can't go a hundred yards in this world without seeing someone whose conditions you can make better,' wrote singer/songwriter David Crosby.

276 The Ant In A Water Barrel (an Ancient Buddhist Story)

A man found an ant sheltering in a water barrel that a family relied on for its water. 'What are you doing in this water barrel?' shouted the man. He removed it and placed it on the ground in the hot sun. That's intolerance.

Later, it crawled back into the barrel. A second person saw it and said, 'It's a hot day, even for ants. Stay as long as you wish.' That's tolerance.

A third person smiled, said nothing, and instinctively fed it a handful of sugar. That's love.

277 Acceptance of 'What Is'

Acceptance means acknowledging the way it is. It doesn't necessarily mean *liking* it. Remember, we don't see things as *they* are; we see them as *we* are – through a lens coloured by our own belief system and preconceptions. Put aside your prejudices (prejudice = pre-judge). Most things are neither good nor bad, they just *are*. Even 'good' and 'bad' are judgements.

Of course, there are many injustices in the world, but this is exactly how it should be if their purpose is to prompt us to reflect and do something about them. There are things we can change directly and things we cannot. How do we do our bit to make the world a kinder, gentler more loving place? Go back to first principles. Make time daily for prayer and meditation. Sow the right seeds and let your harvest grow.

Be aware of what really brought down apartheid and the Berlin Wall – a mass raising of consciousness in which millions of accumulated thoughts added to the energy that brought about change.

When you accept the world as it is, without resistance or resentment, you are on the way to mastering the ego. Stop fighting the way it is. Develop a calm, peaceful mind. Then you will see the lessons and blessings in everything.

278 You Can Do Nothing Without the Intelligence That Works Through You

There's another side to acceptance – accepting that you can do nothing by yourself without the Intelligence that works through you.

Lower your resistance. You know you're in resistance when you use words like should, must, ought, shouldn't, mustn't and so on. They are often an indication that strong religious or cultural programming is controlling your thinking, or you're allowing someone else to set the rules or make your decisions for you. They can make you confused, muddle-headed, unhappy and vengeful – how can such an ineffective person help anyone else? Surely you must put your own house in order first?

Work with CI, not against it. The material that offers least resistance is the best conductor of electricity, and similarly the individual who offers least resistance to the flow of creative energy accomplishes the most, in the shortest time, with the least difficulty.

279 Increase Your Frustration Tolerance

Let go of the idea that everything *should* (note *that* word again) work out exactly as you want from the perspective of your limited human mind. That's not only impossible but also frustrating – for you. In the long run,

frustration can lead to stress-related illness, but it's not circumstances that cause the stress, but your own narrow and dogmatic thinking.

Be more tolerant. Adopt the motto, 'Everything is exactly as it should be and always works out for the best.' In a spiritual sense, this is literally true, despite appearances. You don't have to understand it all – just trust that the universe is unfolding as intended and remember there are no accidents.

280 Embrace Uncertainty and Impermanence

The only certainty in life is uncertainty. Nothing lasts forever, yet we humans waste a great deal of energy fearing and resisting change.

Change is constant. People and things come into our lives then leave. Some changes are necessary; others inevitable. Resistance is futile and brings only suffering.

We find peace only when we embrace uncertainty and welcome change. Flexibility is not weakness, but strength, which is why a tree which sways in the storm is the most likely to survive.

281 Non-Attachment

Happiness comes from participating in the world and enjoying its benefits but not being attached to them.

The happiest person I ever met was a teacher who travelled all over the globe. She was a wheelchair user, unable to walk without crutches. I asked her for the secret of happiness. 'If you really want to be happy,' she replied, 'let go of your attachments.'

'That's not possible,' I replied. 'I have a house, mortgage, children . . .'

She fixed me in her gaze and repeated, 'If you really want to be happy, let go of your attachments.'

It took me a while to understand what she was driving at. We attach ourselves to things which appear solid and permanent, but this is an illusion because in time, they deteriorate or lose their appeal. Enjoy them, but don't rely on them for happiness. If they're no longer satisfying, release them.

Attachment also refers to mental and emotional states – hurts, grudges, anger, complaints and jealousy, etc. When we detach from these, they no longer have any control over us and we find peace.

282 Live In the Eternal Now

One day I finally realised I no longer needed a personal history – so I gave it up.

Carlos Castaneda

Being fully in the moment is one of the great secrets of spiritual living.

Living in the now is an *attitude of mind* which changes *behaviour*. The present moment is the only moment there is. You cannot think, speak, act or feel any time but now. The rest exist only in your imagination. No matter what has gone before it makes little difference now. The past exists only in your mind, and so does the future. Tomorrow will only be real when it becomes today. What you call the future is a daydream that exists only in your mind.

Thoughts of the past often centre on regret. Thoughts about the future are often dogged with worry. What a waste of mental energy! We can't necessarily forget the past, but we can change what we think and how we

feel about it. Nor can we journey into the future. When we keep our minds on the eternal now, our energy becomes more present and focused.

283 Notice How Easily Awareness Wanders Away From the Present

Notice how easily your awareness wanders away from the present moment. Observe how much of the time you find yourself thinking about the past and how much you think about the future. You'll be surprised at the results.

Wake up to the present. The future is promised to no one, so live each day as well as you can. Have goals and ambitions by all means – but remember you can only work towards achieving them in the present.

Keep bringing your thoughts back to the now. Pay attention to where you are and what you are doing. Appreciate what you have right here, right now. This is how you 'live in the present moment' – not too difficult, is it?

284 Celebrate the Moment

Are you so concerned with getting to the future that you're out of touch with the present? Why? You have everything you need to make this your best day ever, so celebrate it.

Every moment is a miracle. As the dramatist, Marcel Pagnol, wrote, 'The reason people find it so hard to be happy is that they always see the past as better than it was, the present worse than it is, and the future less resolved than it will be.'

Develop heightened awareness of everything that is happening around

you now. If you habitually rush through each moment without being fully there, you miss so much that is good, including the opportunity to connect more deeply with others.

285 Never Look Back In Anger and Blame

Never look back in anger and blame. Anger and blame weaken your energy, spoil your life and make you ill. Instead, look back only to forgive and forget. The past is a great teacher, so learn from it and move on.

It helps to give up talking about distressing memories from the past (which merely reinforces the pain). Let go of anything – physical, mental or emotional – that keeps you rooted in the past. In time you'll stop thinking about them and they will lose their emotional intensity.

286 Everything That Happened Just Did

Everything that has ever happened to you, in a spiritual sense, was neither good nor bad; it just happened. What have you learned from it?

There is a lesson concealed in every situation. Look deeper. Every experience, pleasant or unpleasant, can help you distinguish between what is real and unreal, show you what really matters, and guide you towards fulfilling your purpose.

Be especially grateful for challenges that stretch you, especially difficult people. There are no accidents in the spiritual realms – the people you find hardest to deal with are often those from whom you can learn the most.

287 Don't Make Promises That You Can't Keep In the Present

Once a promise is made, keep it, but only make promises you can honour in the present, the only moment over which you have any control. Other promises may limit your options in the future, causing you to feel trapped. You can't know now how you'll see things in the future, when you have grown in awareness. Instead, keep your mind open and receptive to the stream of present moments that await you.

Avoid phrases such as, 'I'll always . . .', 'I'll never . . .' And, 'as long as I live I'll . . .' Circumstances change, and so do people. How can you know what will be best in ten years time, or even next year or next month?

Yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Traditional Indian poem

288 Be a Good Listener

Attentive listening is a present moment activity. It is how you show that you appreciate and value others, are interested in them, respect them and are concerned for their well-being.

If a friend or stranger is in pain, sit and share their suffering. Give time, listen and be patient. There's no greater service you can do for another person.

To listen properly you have to be fully grounded in the here and now. If your attention wanders to past or future, you're no longer listening.

289 Integrity

Integrity is having the courage to stick to your principles and live the truth as you see it, speaking and acting honestly in everything you do. Integrity gives rise to a clear conscience and breeds self-respect and peace of mind.

If you relate to others by distorting the truth, you waste a great deal of energy trying to remember what you said, when and to whom. With integrity, there's no need to play mind games.

Integrity is also one of the secrets of popularity; most of us prefer to associate with people who are reliable and keep their word.

290 Teachings From the World's Major Religions

Most religions have rules of behaviour intended to help their devotees realise their spiritual nature.

Some are articles of faith. For example, the first of the Five Pillars of Islam proclaim that, 'There is no god worthy of praise except Allah and Mohammed is the messenger and servant of Allah.' Unless one accepts this, one cannot be a Muslim. Similarly, one cannot be a Christian without accepting as a matter of faith that Jesus was the one and only Son of God, born of a virgin and later raised from the dead.

The Jewish Ten Commandments also begin with a statement of faith: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.'

Matters of faith cannot be proved or disproved. Either one accepts them or one doesn't.

291 Principles of Conduct

The great religions offer down-to-earth practical advice for the conduct of our daily lives, and there is a great deal of overlap between them. The Quran, for example, is a compendium of guidance on happy, healthy and respectful living, and the Bible contains a wealth of advice on proper conduct.

The Buddhist Ten Commandments, below, are more or less common to most other religions:

1. Respect all life; do not kill.
2. Do not steal.
3. Avoid impurity and refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. Be truthful, but do not hurt others unnecessarily.
5. Look for the best in others.
6. Speak decently and with dignity; refrain from lying, slandering, gossiping and spreading rumours.
7. Talk purposely or stay silent.
8. Do not indulge in envy; rejoice at the good fortune of others.
9. Embrace all living beings with kindness.
10. Seek truth and overcome ignorance.

292 Dr Usui's Principles

Dr Usui revived the art of Reiki healing in Japan in the nineteenth century and was the founder of the technique that bears his name. The principles he expounded are based on long-standing truths.

1. Just for today, I am choosing not to feel anger about things I used to feel angry about.
2. Just for today, I am choosing not to worry about things I used to worry about.
3. Just for today, I am going to find satisfaction or enjoyment in more and more of what I do.
4. Just for today, I am going to work on my own well-being and health, learning the skills to allow me to take control.
5. Just for today, I am going to be kind to others (even if I have to do it through gritted teeth initially!).

293 Writings On an Orphanage Wall

Mother Teresa wrote these words on the wall of her children's home in Calcutta. They are a blueprint for fulfilling our purpose and living to our highest potential.

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centred.
Love them anyway.
If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Do good anyway.
If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.
Succeed anyway.
What you spend years building, someone may destroy overnight.
Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, people may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.
The good you do will be forgotten tomorrow.
Do it anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough.
Give your best anyway.
You see, in the final analysis, it is all between you and God; it was never between you and them anyway.

294 Reflection

Look back over the previous few sections, then ask yourself:

- Which of these am I already doing?
- Of which would I like to do more?
- Which am I not currently doing but would like to do?

Now make a list of changes you intend to make. Apply the I-T-I-A Formula©. Monitor your progress and, above all, persevere!

18 The joy of simplicity

> *There's only one reason why you're not experiencing bliss at this present moment and it's because you're thinking or focusing on what you don't have.*
>
> *Anthony de Mello*

There's a paradox in matters of prosperity, spirituality and the simple life. We live in an abundant universe governed by an intelligent energy which is willing and able to meet all our needs. And yet most of the great spiritual teachers were exponents of the simple life, shunning wealth and status. So do we have to deprive ourselves to get in touch with our spirituality? Absolutely not! But there is a balance to be achieved between seeking material possessions and pursuing spiritual goals.

Modern life appears complex and busy, but our needs are really very simple. Socrates, a leading proponent of the simple life, loved going to the market in Athens. When asked about this, he replied, 'I love to go and see all the things I'm happy without.' Once we have a steady supply of the essentials, extra money and belongings make very little difference to our happiness.

When we live simply we discover, like Socrates, that there are sources of pleasure that do not depend on possessions and countless things we're content to live without.

295 Everything Material Is Impermanent

Everything you have will one day cease to exist in its present form. Even your body will return to the dust from which it was made. If you chase after possessions, hoard them and rely on them for security, you make yourself a slave to things that inexorably deteriorate. They are not a stable basis on which to build your happiness.

People who are highly acquisitive are often too busy or stressed to enjoy life. Think of the effort and expenditure to which some go to ensure that they are up to date with the latest fashion trends so they can win the admiration of others similarly inclined – and yet in a very short time, the items on which they relied for their feelings of pleasure lose their appeal. Wouldn't it be better to attend to something that brings lasting benefit – the qualities of consciousness that bring lasting security, happiness and peace of mind?

296 Buddhist Economics

One of the greatest statements on living simply is to be found in E. F. Schumacher's book, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*. The chapter entitled 'Buddhist Economics' pointed out that consumption is merely a means to an end. Our aim, he argued, 'should be to obtain the maximum well-being with the minimum of consumption.'

Using clothing as an example, he suggested that the most economically efficient approach would be to provide warmth, comfort and an attractive appearance for everyone, with the least amount of effort and minimum destruction of natural resources. Collecting clothes we hardly ever wear simply doesn't make sense. We could choose to toil less and have more time for other pursuits. This would also put less pressure on the environment.

When we go for maximum well-being with minimum consumption, we help to make the world a kinder, gentler place, and it doesn't mean depriving ourselves because we're gaining much more than we lose, including time for ourselves and our loved ones.

297 Good Work

Work has two purposes: firstly, it provides for our needs; secondly, it expresses our gifts and powers. This is equally important, because if you work only for money, you will never be prosperous, regardless of what you earn.

If your work is unfulfilling, change it. Find work that you enjoy, uses your talents and enables you to make your best contribution. If this alarms you, relax! Apply the spiritual principles, set the Laws of Cause and Effect and Attraction in motion, and use the I-T-I-A Formula©. Everything you need will then manifest in your life. When you do what you love and put your heart and soul into it, providing it benefits others, you will be taken care of, according to Spiritual Law.

298 Prosperity Theology

It is popular in some religious circles to argue that accumulating wealth is not only a worthy pursuit but also a spiritual activity. I attended a seminar some years ago given by a minister of a 'prosperity church' in the USA. She argued that it is OK to acquire as much as you can because when you take more, supply expands and there is more to go round.

This argument contains a glimmer of truth; it's true there is unlimited spiritual substance (energy and intelligence) in the universe, all capable of manifesting. However, until we use it to provide for all in an equitable

manner, we risk endorsing self-indulgence, ignoring the less well-off, squandering resources and destroying the life-support systems of the planet, all of which are consequences of pursuing narrow material self-interest.

Today, half the world's population is undernourished while the other half suffers from excess. Every year, more people are born into absolute poverty and ever-increasing areas of land become infertile due to soil erosion and global warming. Typically, Mahatma Gandhi put the problem in a nutshell: 'There is enough for everyone's *need*, but not their *greed*.'

299 Is It Unspiritual To Be Poor?

Prosperity theologists believe that it is *un*spiritual to be poor. They teach that poor people are unaware of the spiritual principles by which their wants and needs are satisfied by the Universal Source of Supply. Wealth, they say, is a cosmic 'thank you' for our contribution. If we have plenty, it's because we give plenty. If not, it's because we don't give enough.

What nonsense! Do 'thank you's only come in material form? And does every wealthy person offer above-average service to humanity? What about those who inherit wealth, hoard it or make their money by trading arms, child pornography, tobacco products, illegal drugs or people trafficking and so on? What about those whose businesses or investments pollute the oceans or destroy the rain forests? And isn't this insulting to the millions who work hard to provide for themselves and their families without ever becoming rich, many of whom are far more spiritually attuned than the mega-rich?

Spirituality and *wealth* are not related. You can be *poor* and unspiritual or *rich* and unspiritual; you can be *rich* and spiritual or *poor* and spiritual. What matters is the consciousness with which you approach it.

However, spirituality and *prosperity* are related. Spiritually aware people manifest what they need, use it wisely, share it with others and feel good about what they do.

Your aim should be to achieve a balance between managing your earthly affairs and managing your spiritual affairs. Enjoy what life has to offer, but don't get so caught up in worldly matters that you lose sight of the bigger picture.

300 Do You Have To Be Poor To Be Spiritual?

Most of the great spiritual teachers lived simply and had few possessions. Some gave up great wealth to spread their teachings.

Before he found his mission, the Prophet Mohammed was a successful merchant; afterwards, he led a simple life, milking his own goat, mending his own clothes and helping with the household chores. When he died he left virtually nothing. In later life, Mahatma Gandhi, once a successful lawyer, owned only a loin cloth, toothbrush, pair of spectacles and spinning wheel. Jesus of Nazareth quit his carpentry business to become a wandering preacher, and Mother Teresa owned only two sets of clothes, one to wear, one to wash.

So do you have to live in poverty to be spiritual? Not at all. There is nothing inherently spiritual about living on the bread line. Even the Buddha, who turned his back on inherited wealth to live as a humble monk, taught that it is not necessary to deprive ourselves. It is selfishness and greed – not material sufficiency – that clash with spiritual values.

301 Simplify Your Life

Simplify your life. Reduce your dependence on possessions. Surround yourself only with objects that meet your needs and delight you. There are many ways to live simply without feeling deprived.

- Give up the need to have more. 'More' is one of the mantras of the ego, which believes 'I never have enough' and 'If I don't get it I won't be happy'.
- Give up the desire for luxury.
- Shun ostentation.
- Choose simple tastes that place less strain on the environment.
- Learn to use less expensive things in more creative ways.

Truly prosperous people do not need to burden themselves with unnecessary personal possessions. They know instinctively that they are connected to the Source and have all the wealth of the universe at their command.

> *It's the preoccupation with possessions more than any other thing that keeps us from living freely and nobly.*
>
> *Professor Bertrand Russell*

302 Reflect On Your Desires Before Acting On Them

Reflect on your desires before acting on them. How would they improve your life? Are you sure you're not relying on your acquisitions to be happy? How much money do you need and how many possessions to live your purpose and support your chosen lifestyle?

When you're gripped by an impulse to acquire something new, ask yourself:

- ➢ Do I really need this?
- ➢ Why?
- ➢ Will it bring me more 'pleasure' than 'pain'?
- ➢ Have I kidded myself I need it to be happy?

303 Learn To Say 'No'

If you don't need it, don't buy it in the first place. Resist the persuasive skills of the marketing and advertising industries and don't hand over your money to whoever is trying to tempt you. Research has repeatedly shown that once we have enough to feed, clothe and house ourselves, each additional item makes little difference to our happiness and well-being. Find better uses for your time and money.

Extend the habit of saying 'no' to more than you need to other areas – more work, more problems and complications, and so on. Instead attend to higher things and seek only what you truly desire.

304 Let Go of Envy

Envy does untold harm to well-being. When you envy what someone else has (or appears to have), you establish poverty thinking patterns in your consciousness. You divert your attention away from factors under your control (your thoughts, words and actions) to those beyond your control (what others do, say and have). And what do thoughts such as these attract?

So what if someone has more than you? They are no better or worse; they have just made different choices. You cannot know the struggles they have

gone through to acquire that 'stuff', nor the weight of responsibility it brings.

Instead, take pleasure in others' prosperity and wish them well, thus adding to your own feelings of contentment.

305 Clear the Clutter

Free yourself of unnecessary possessions. Don't hang onto things on the off-chance that one day they may come in useful. This attitude is born out of fear that one day your needs won't be met, which keeps you rooted in poverty consciousness.

If you don't need it, get rid of it. If you haven't worn something for a while, get rid of it. Recycle anything you can't use or give it to charity. Clear out your drawers, cupboards, shelves and every nook and cranny, and once you've cleared a space, don't refill it. A good clear-out leaves you feeling lighter, stimulates flow – and clears the channel to receive more of what you really need.

> *Wealth beyond what is natural is of no more use than an overflowing container.*
>
> *Epicurus*

Theme 6

Feeling Good All the Time

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19 Love

The creative energy underlying the universe is love. Love is the greatest power in the world, stronger than gravity, an invisible yet powerful force which pulls each of us towards our ultimate destiny. The very word, spoken with sincerity, dissolves away hate.

When love flows freely through us, we are in harmony with CI. Mind and body are transformed, and then we affect everyone around us. Our relationships change for the better and all the blessings of the universe are ours.

> *The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides, gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.*
>
> *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

306 Human Love Is a Pale Shadow of Universal Love

Human love is a pale shadow of universal love. Universal love is pure, total self-giving with no strings attached and no expectation of return. It transcends every aspect of human form and personality.

Human love, however, is ego-dominated and bound up with emotion. It can arouse fierce passions such as jealousy, possessiveness and revenge. The ego easily confuses love with:

- Co-dependence – 'I need you; I can't live without you'
- Conditionality – 'I'll love you, but only if . . .'
- Lust – 'I fancy you'
- Romance – 'I love the fantasy I have of you'
- Criticism – 'I love you but I wish I could change you'

Universal love flows irrespective of our thoughts about it, and it has no consciousness of good or evil. It never sees anything wrong in what it loves: if it did, it would no longer be pure love, which doesn't discriminate. Universal love cannot be explained or understood intellectually, only experienced. The more we think about love, contemplate it, speak and act lovingly, the stronger it grows.

307 Love and Fear – Only Two Emotions

All emotions boil down to just two – love and fear. We always have the choice – whether to think and act from one or the other (we cannot be in both places at once).

When we're being loving, we are coming from our Higher Selves. The Higher Self is, of course, part of Creative Intelligence, which *is* love. Love is never inappropriate and there are no circumstances in which the expression of love is wrong. Spread love because it is right, whether or not you are loved in return.

When we're acting out of fear, we are coming from the ego. We see the world as a place where we can be easily hurt and are easily upset when we don't get our way. We may try and protect ourselves from attack by becoming angry, selfish and aggressive, which only makes things worse.

Replacing fear-based responses with love-based responses automatically raises our vibrations. Fear dissolves when we understand our true nature and act on what is real – our spiritual selves and their connection with CI.

308 Love Is Patient and Kind

One of the great passages on love was written by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. In it, he defines love in terms of everyday activities – patience, kindness, generosity, forgiveness and so on. Professor Henry Drummond, the nineteenth-century author, scientist and theologist, was so impressed by this passage he wrote an entire book on it – *The Greatest Thing in the World* – and urged his students to join him in reading this passage every week for three months. Many reported that it had transformed their lives.

Why not do the same? Read these words daily. Then – and this is more challenging – put them into practice!

> *Love is patient and kind. It is never jealous. It does not boast, it is not proud; it is never rude or self-seeking; it is not easily angered, and keeps no record of wrongs. Love takes no pleasure in evil and delights in truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, to persevere.*
>
> *New Testament, 1 Corinthians, 4–7*

309 Love Is a Decision, Not a Reaction

Love doesn't necessarily just happen; you must *want* to express it and *choose* to live this way.

Keep your love energy flowing. Make it your aim to deepen your experience of love. As Dr Mansukh Patel writes, 'Love does not fail you when you are rejected, betrayed or apparently not loved. Love fails you when you reject, betray and do not love.'

Hate is not conquered by hate: hate is conquered by love.
The Dhammapada

310 Fear

President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously remarked, 'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.' He was explaining that fear paralyses and takes away of our sense of proportion. But it can also be a self-fulfilling prophecy; we often get what we fear simply because we focus our attention on it.

On the spiritual plane, there is nothing to fear. We are guided and supported by an Intelligence that knows exactly what we need and wants only the best for us. Only our *perceptions* of danger appear real.

Bring love to the presence of fear and fear dissolves. When we think and talk about how afraid we are, we block out love and constantly feel fearful and insecure.

311 Ask 'What Am I Afraid of?'

Whenever you are tempted to judge or condemn another person, or feel yourself becoming angry, defensive, jealous or resentful, you are acting out of fear. Go inside and ask your Higher Self: 'What am I afraid of?' The answer(s) may surprise you and you'll almost certainly feel differently about the other person and yourself.

312 Let Love Be Your Mantra

Make love your mantra. Affirm your *intention* to love. *Think* loving thoughts. Use the affirmation, 'I know nothing but love,' which raises your vibrations. Constantly *imagine* yourself projecting love to all beings from the heart. Act more lovingly. Leave behind the ego with its selfish impulses and concerns.

Practise non-resistance. If someone is rude to you, respond with courtesy and respect. If someone hurts or disappoints you, be kind and forgiving. Stay calm if you are unfairly treated and resist the temptation to try and get even. This is what is meant by 'turn the other cheek'.

Love is the ultimate feel-good emotion; live it. Enjoy it!

> *You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have truly lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love.*
>
> *Henry Drummond*

20 Self-esteem

When you were a child, did anyone tell you that you were a miracle of creation, made of the same stuff as the stars, and that everything in the universe plays its part in supporting you? Probably not. If you were schooled in certain religions, you were more likely to be told that you were a humble sinner rather than a boundless child of Spirit.

Very few young people reach maturity without having their self-esteem dented by clumsy or insensitive programming. Some psychologists believe childhood experiences lay down the pattern for life and can never be surmounted, but this is simply not true. *What determines your self-esteem is not your upbringing,* but your *beliefs* about it and your *attitude* to yourself now. And these are entirely within your control.

Self-esteem is a spiritual issue. If you think of yourself as anything less than perfect and imagine yourself as less worthy than anybody else, you are selling yourself short. Creative Intelligence doesn't make mistakes. It created you exactly as you are supposed to be.

> *The moment you accept yourself as you are, all burdens, all mountainous burdens, simply disappear. Then life is a sheer joy, a festival of lights.*
>
> *Osho*

313 A Human Being Having Occasional Spiritual Experiences?

The biggest leap in self-esteem takes place when you stop thinking of yourself merely as a body with a brain and instead see yourself as spiritual being in human form.

When we think of ourselves as nothing more than physical beings, our self-esteem is heavily based on our material form and what we do. We believe that our self-worth is related to our performance, our ability to do something well and what we earn. We are easily influenced by what others say, and are over-anxious to please. Fear – of what others think of us and what might happen in the future – plays a big part in our thinking.

In short, when we think of ourselves as merely physical beings, we're in the grip of the ego and cut off from our Source.

314 A Spiritual Being Having Human Experiences

When we know that we are spiritual beings, our entire perspective changes. Our sense of identity is now based on non-physical attributes, such as our inner beauty and intrinsic worth. We are familiar, very familiar, with the silent, peaceful state in which we are connected to our Source.

We are guided by our intuition and no longer dependent on others' opinions. We honour our own deepest values and cherish wisdom and truth. We know that we have these within ourselves and strive to make them a greater part of our experience.

We see others as spiritual beings, so are more tolerant and less likely to label them. We recognise the subtle levels of communication taking place between us, including synchronicity. We take responsibility for our thoughts, words, feelings and actions, knowing that these are choices which actively create our future.

315 Transform Yourself By the Renewal of Your Mind

Your self-esteem is a set of thoughts which manifest in attitudes, emotions and behaviours. If it needs a makeover, apply the I-T-I-A Formula© and remember: all four parts are necessary to effect permanent change.

- *Intention*. Commit yourself to raising your self-esteem.
- *Thinking*. Monitor your self-talk, examine your beliefs and use affirmative prayer to realign your thinking.
- *Imagination*. Imagine feeling and behaving like someone with high self-esteem, CI flowing through with you, no longer driven by other people's expectations.
- *Action*. Let your intentions, thinking and imagination show in your behaviour. If this feels uncomfortable at first, take it in small steps, ignore any discomfort and above all persist. Consistent action based on right thinking always brings results.

316 Decide To Treat Yourself With Love and Respect

Decide *right now* that from now on you'll treat yourself only with love and respect, and accept only what is right for you. Show the same compassion and reverence to yourself as you would to any other part of creation.

317 Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance and self-esteem go hand in hand. Self-acceptance means acknowledging what you are – a spiritual being in human form – and respecting all aspects of yourself.

Self-acceptance does not mean giving up on yourself. If there's something you want to change, that *can* be changed and is *worth* changing, change it. Do it lovingly. Otherwise, joyfully make the most of what you've got.

Take a pen and paper and complete these statements:

1. Ten things I like about myself right now are . . .
2. Five things that really mark me out as unique are . . .
3. Three things I often fail to notice or appreciate about myself are . . .
4. Three things about myself I wouldn't want to change are . . .
5. The main reason I'm glad I'm me is . . .

At this moment . . .
What you are is what you're meant to be.
Wherever you are is where you're meant to be.
Whatever you're doing is what you're meant to be doing.
And if you want to change any of this – that too is exactly as it's meant to be.

318 Use Affirmations To Build Your Self-esteem

If you become aware that you are thinking of yourself as anything less than perfect and whole, cancel the thought and replace it with a self-esteem building affirmation such as:

- I am a child of the universe and it is right for me to have health, happiness and prosperity. I claim them now and manifest them in my life. And so it is.
- I am part of Creative Intelligence. Every moment, its wisdom and power flow into and through me.
- I am whole and perfect. The loving energy that created me from the field of particles, cells and matter does not make mistakes.

Regular use of affirmations such as these reminds us that self-deprecating thoughts have nothing to sustain them other than our own habits.

319 Self-Love

Is it wrong to love yourself? Some people think so. They think of people who love themselves as being rather unpleasant because they associate loving oneself with selfishness and conceit. But *loving oneself* is not the same as being *in love with oneself*. This is usually a form of bravado indulged in by individuals who think too little of themselves and desperately try to hide it.

To love yourself, you don't have to do everything perfectly. You don't have to prove anything. You don't even have to do your best, and it's OK to make mistakes.

Self-love benefits others too, for only when you have love for yourself can you share it with others and inspire them to love themselves too. Hating oneself is no way to spread love and help others to feel better about themselves.

320 Give Up Approval-Seeking Behaviour

It's perfectly natural to want to be liked and accepted, but it becomes a problem if you constantly edit yourself to win others' approval. Approval-seeking behaviour has some short-term benefits (e.g. it can help avoid arguments) but has long-term consequences. You are unlikely to feel good about yourself if you continually pander to others.

Concern yourself less with other people's opinions. Others don't necessarily see things your way or know what's best for you. Make your own decisions and honour your own values. Others' expectations are not your concern. You didn't create them, and you don't own them. If they don't like what you do, that's their problem, not yours.

You are unique. Strangely, many of us are obsessed with trying to make sure we behave in a manner we think our fellow human beings find acceptable. You don't have to follow suit. Value your uniqueness. When you live your own truth, the sense of freedom is invigorating.

321 Keep Working On Yourself

You are your gift to the world, so make it as good as it can be. Be on the lookout for anything that can help you in your personal and spiritual growth. Read inspiring books, listen to audio programmes, attend live talks, and seek out enlightening films and documentaries. Consider different points of view – don't just listen to those you think you'll agree with.

Let nothing get in the way of your quest for spiritual awareness and inner peace.

322 Be Less Self-Absorbed

Ironically, one of the great secrets of building self-esteem is to become less self-absorbed.

You may think there's a contradiction here. On the one hand, working on your self-esteem requires a certain amount of introspection. On the other, our purpose as spiritual beings is to become better channels for CI and make a greater contribution to the well-being of others. To do this, you need to be strong, and the more you work on yourself the stronger you become.

Go inside, access your inner resources and build from within; then allow your Higher Self to express itself in the world.

> *When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves.*
>
> *William Arthur Ward*

323 Seek Out Beauty

See beauty in everything; find reasons to see things as beautiful, including yourself. Sometimes you may have to look beyond appearances, and that's OK. Beauty renews us and makes us feel good – be open to it, seek it out.

Try this: Pause what you are doing right now and look around. Take a pen and paper and write down ten things in your immediate surroundings that are beautiful. Don't confine yourself to visual things – music, a voice, a touch, a smell, a taste, etc. can all be things of beauty. And don't forget to look in the mirror when making your list.

324 At All Times Act As If Your Self-esteem Is High

If you're not used to thinking of yourself as a person with high self-esteem, you may feel uncomfortable when you first put the ideas in this book into practice.

Don't be deterred by your emotional programming (for this is the cause of your discomfort). Stretch yourself a little every day. Have a go at things which you would previously have found scary. For example, if you are shy, make a point of striking up conversations with new people. If you feel anxious about speaking up, deepen your breathing, relax your muscles, control the self-talk and say your piece. Persevere. Each success, however small, brings encouragement and before long the uncomfortable feelings fade away.

325 The Difference It Makes

As your self-esteem grows, your energy becomes stronger. Other changes occur too. You become more tolerant, unruffled, compassionate and peaceful.

Others notice your new demeanour and feel better in your presence. (They sense your higher level of vibration – animals are also very quick to pick up on this.) You instill calmness and confidence in others, and every time you play a part in boosting another's self-esteem and well-being, your own rises to at least the same degree.

21 Happiness

Most of us think we know what makes us happy, but do we? We chase after money and status, seeking happiness by pandering to the senses. We think these will do the trick, but if we knew what really makes us happy, we would crave little. Why? Because happiness comes from within.

I spotted a competition in a newspaper recently. ‘Change your life forever!’ it announced in huge letters. ‘Win a new home, a car, a dream holiday, £10,000 a year for life to help you maintain your new, luxurious lifestyle, and enjoy VIP treatment from celebrity experts.’ Well, obviously if you won this handsome prize your life would be different, but would you be any happier? Possibly so for a few months, but unless your consciousness expanded to match your wealth, the effects would be temporary. It would still be *you* with these things. If you were unhappy before, unless you changed happiness would still elude you.

Some UK politicians are suggesting that in the not too distant future, governments will be judged on how they contribute to the happiness of their electorate! Now there’s a thought!

> *Happiness cannot be travelled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude.*
>
> *Dr Denis Waitley*

326 Spiritually Inclined People Are Happier

Psychologists once spent most of their time studying mental illness, but recently they've turned their attention to what brings health and happiness. They've discovered that happiness is largely influenced by non-physical factors such as values, attitudes and beliefs. For example:

- Across all cultures, people who have a happy marriage, spend time with their families, and enjoy caring friendships, a varied and rewarding social life and worthwhile goals which are enjoyable to pursue tend to be happier than average.
- Wealth is not a good predictor of happiness; people do not grow happier as they grow richer, unless they start below the poverty line. Lottery winners, for instance, are no happier than the rest of us, and despite the massive increase in wealth in developed countries in the last fifty years, levels of happiness have not increased.
- Age, gender, education, nationality and race are unrelated to happiness.
- Spiritually inclined people are generally happier because they have a sense of meaning and a belief in something bigger than themselves that brings hope and optimism and faith, all of which are closely linked to happiness.

All in all, studies support the conclusion drawn by the broadcaster and writer Hugh Downs. 'A happy person is not a person with a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.'

327 Suffering

Suffering is not inherent to life. We bring suffering upon ourselves through ignorance and by flouting the spiritual laws in our search for happiness

and fulfilment. We give the ego free rein to control our behaviour, whereas our happiness would best be served by letting go of the ego's thinking and behaviour patterns.

When we grow in understanding we discover the causes of suffering and strive to overcome them. We stop trying to get round the Law of Cause and Effect and ignore the Law of Attraction. We let go of unhealthy desires, accept ourselves and other people, and stop resisting 'what is'. We stop trying to work out everything intellectually and allow life to flow.

328 Take Responsibility For Your Happiness

We gain a wonderful sense of freedom when we understand that it is not events and circumstances that determine our happiness, but our state of consciousness. We have no control over what others think, say or do. If we rely on these for our happiness, we're doomed.

As the Greek philosopher Epictetus said, 'There is only one way to happiness and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of your will.'

Happiness comes from inside. Wherever you go, you take yourself with you. Unless you are happy with yourself, you will not be happy with what you do, where you are, who you're with, what you achieve or what you have. In fact, you'll never be happy with life. Period.

329 Happiness Is an Attitude

Abraham Lincoln famously remarked that, 'Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.' A happy person sees things which

justify their happiness; an unhappy person sees things that justify their unhappiness. Bad things happen to everybody, but that doesn't mean we can't be happy. It's dwelling on the negative that wrecks lives.

Happiness is impossible without the decision to be happy. Start every day as you intend to go on, with a cheerful attitude and cheerful thoughts that boost you in body and spirit. Then keep it up for the rest of the day.

330 Yes!

Make 'yes' an affirmation. 'Yes' energises and motivates. Say 'Yes!' to 'what is'. Say, 'Yes!' whenever you feel down or disheartened, and when facing a challenge. Silently is good – out loud even better.

331 Happiness Doesn't Have To Be Earned

Western culture spreads unhelpful beliefs about happiness. We are taught that it has to be earned, worked for, paid for and deserved. Otherwise we are expecting something for nothing.

Not so! As spiritual beings, it is right that we should be happy. What is more, it's our birthright. Happiness is available to all. Claim it!

This is not a selfish attitude. If you don't have happiness, how can you share it? And how can you make anyone else happy by being miserable?

332 Heaven and Hell

Some religions teach that heaven and hell are *places* where we go after death, but spiritual awareness reveals that this is not so: they are *states of consciousness*. We create them by the way we think and act.

When we align our thoughts with the highest ideas, tension is released and we feel good. The body is flooded with natural opiates, endorphins, which are one hundred times stronger than morphine. This is heaven. Heaven is here every moment when we trust that good will unfold and affirm CI as the source of our happiness and support.

When we fill our minds with negative thoughts, we lose touch with CI, tension rises, the bloodstream is flooded with stress hormones (cortisol and adrenalin), digestion suffers, muscles tighten and we feel bad. This is hell.

You are responsible for your own heaven and hell. If you frequently find yourself in the hell state, examine your state of consciousness. What you are resisting? Are you trying to defy Universal Law? What adjustments must you make?

333 The Philosopher and The King

A mighty king asked a learned philosopher to explain the meaning of heaven and hell.

'You!' replied the philosopher with an angry tone, 'do you really expect me to be able to explain something so profound to a stupid, power-crazy, self-centred fool like you?'

The king was incensed. 'Why you . . .' he exploded with rage, 'I could have you executed for this, how dare you, you . . . !'

'That', said the philosopher, smiling, 'is hell.'

The king took a deep breath and prostrated himself. He thanked the philosopher for his wisdom. 'And that', said the latter smiling, 'is heaven.'

Legend has it the king instantly became enlightened.

334 Happiness Is a Journey, Not a Destination

There's an Eastern proverb, 'There is no way to happiness; happiness is the way.' It reminds us to treasure every moment.

If you believe that your happiness depends on your getting to somewhere else or achieving your goals, you're mistaken. When you arrive at your destination, you'll find that after a short period of elation the effect wears off and you're back where you started, no happier than before. Why? *Because achieving your goals takes place in the future, but happiness can only exist in the present.*

Choose worthwhile goals and take pleasure from achieving them, but don't allow your happiness to *depend* on achieving them. Instead, enjoy the process. If you succeed – great! If you don't – great! You've had fun trying, grown as a person and probably done some good along the way.

335 Happiness Is Not An Absence of Problems

Happiness is not the *absence* of problems but *faith* in our ability to deal with them. Problems are part of life, and every problem has something to teach us.

If you're waiting for all your problems to be solved or hoping for a life without problems to be happy, you'll wait in vain. Part of happiness is enjoying challenges, overcoming difficulties and learning from the process.

336 Don't Confuse Happiness With Fun

Happy people have lots of fun, but happiness and fun are not the same. Happiness is a lasting and stable state of being while fun is transitory. Fun pastimes bring pleasure for a while but the effect wears off once the activity ends.

To be happy, we don't need everything to be fun. It's necessary to undertake unpleasant tasks and put up with tedium from time to time. I've laboured in factories, lifted soaking bags of manure from a leaky barn onto a lorry, done mind-numbing office work and sold cleaning products door to door. All these jobs were unpleasant but tolerable because I knew they were just stepping stones to a brighter future.

Many people are drawn into fun activities that distract them from our problems (like drinking excessively, drugs or unsafe sex, for example), only to find that they've made matters worse. Instead, focus your mind on what brings happiness and lay down the right causes. This is the way to find true happiness that endures.

337 Count Your Blessings

Look for the blessings in everything. There always are some. You may not always see the bigger picture, but behind the appearances all is in order. The world is a beautiful and bounteous place. Be grateful for it all.

338 Be Cheerful

Be cheerful. Happiness is infectious. When you radiate cheerfulness, you attract happy people. Be cheerful even if you're not feeling 100% inside. Why let your physical or emotional states detract from someone else's day?

Let your inner child out to play. Smile a lot and look for the funny side in every situation. Put your ego to one side and don't take yourself so seriously. Laugh loud and often – laughter has been proved to be an effective medicine just as sadness is at the root of many physical ills.

339 Laugh with Buddha

Laughing does you good. Laughter can help you deal with many things including the stresses of our daily lives. A good laugh can stimulate your organs as you take in more oxygen and leave you with a pleasantly relaxed feeling.

The Laughing Buddha is a wandering monk who symbolises happiness and smiles knowingly at the absurdity of human behaviour. According to legend, if you rub his pot belly, you will have prosperity and good luck.

Buy yourself a replica Laughing Buddha and laugh with him. The Laughing Buddha reminds us that life is a game. Play well, but remember that a great deal of human behaviour is a game in the wider scheme of things.

340 Music and Song

Some music has an uplifting quality, a feel-good factor, and some has the opposite effect. Choose what you listen to carefully. Some types of music (e.g. heavy metal, aggressive rap, electronically generated disco beats, etc.) have even been shown to weaken the body's immune system and bring on depression.

Music need not be serious or liturgical to have a spiritual appeal. Many popular pieces are very moving. (How about George' Harrison's 'My Sweet Lord', Judy Collins' 'Amazing Grace' or Bob Dylan's 'Every Grain of Sand'?) Singing and chanting are also good for you.

341 The Inner Smile

The Inner Smile is not a moving of the lips, but *an attitude*. You imagine your whole body smiling and project the smile into the world around you. The Inner Smile has energy which dissolves inner blockages, invigorates and enhances your ability to love and be happy.

The Inner Smile is important for continuous happiness and good health. Start by relaxing your forehead and imagining your brow chakra (see Chapter 10) open and smiling. Let the smile spread into your eyes, down the entire length of your body and into your internal organs. Then let it radiate into your aura.

The ancient spiritual Masters of India and China taught special meditative techniques to enhance the Inner Smile. It is said that most of the enlightened Masters had incredible smiles which originated from within and made anyone in their presence feel wonderful and relaxed.

342 Stop Making Comparisons

Commercial interests have a great deal to gain by making us feel dissatisfied. They know full well that only an unsatisfied need motivates, so they encourage us to compare what we have, what we look like and what we do with others. Advertisers skilfully encourage us to want what others have, hoping this will encourage us to buy.

Happiness, though, has nothing to do with one's appearance, wealth, achievements, possessions and so on, so why compare? What's the point of weighing one set of delusions against another?

Banish comparisons from your thinking and speaking. This is a guaranteed way of enjoying greater happiness.

343 Let Happiness Come To You

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote, 'Happiness is a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which if you sit down quietly, may alight on you.' Happiness is an attitude or state of consciousness. Have you ever tried chasing an attitude?

When we discover what makes us unhappy, stop doing those things and instead act in harmony with Universal Law, happiness comes and gently sits on our shoulder.

22 Peace of mind

Everyone is looking for peace of mind, and we don't have to look far. Peace is our natural state. At our very core lies the endless peace that comes from our spiritual selves. Our aim is to get in touch with it so we can maintain unity with our Source. It's what this book is all about.

However, our inner peace is easily drowned out by the part of us that is willing to trade peace against its will to be heard – the ego. Only when we lay the ego aside do we find peace. It's been there all along. We've just taken our attention elsewhere.

Every day, each of us has dozens of opportunities to choose peace. All it takes is a shift in awareness and a change in our way of thinking. It's never far away. Reach for it and it's yours.

> *Peace is all around us – in the world and in nature – and within us – in our bodies and our spirits. Once we learn to touch this peace, we will be healed and transformed.*
>
> *Thich Nhat Hahn*

344 Do You Create Resistance To Peace?

Resistance to peace comes from non-peaceful thoughts – thoughts of fear, worry, anxiety, guilt, revenge and so on. Monitor these thoughts, let them go, and remind yourself that peace is your natural state.

If you find yourself resisting peace by dwelling on peace-destroying thoughts, replace them with peace-enhancing affirmations such as:

- I attract only peace and peaceful people into my life.
- I can choose peace instead of this.
- I am a centre of peace and love.
- Peace radiates from me.
- I choose to feel good and spread my good feelings to the people around me.

345 Be a Beacon

We bless the world when we remain peaceful regardless of what is happening around us. We may be surrounded by ego-driven individuals, but we can still be at peace. Be like a daffodil planted in a field of weeds. The daffodil does not become a weed just because it is surrounded by weeds. It still grows tall and strong as it reaches towards the sunlight.

Turn every moment into a moment of peace. Let your first thoughts of the day be peaceful. If at any time you become aware of a non-peaceful feeling, send thoughts of peace to it. If anyone disturbs your peace, send thoughts of peace to them too. Let your last thoughts of the day also be of peace. Pray and meditate daily to speed your progress.

346 Let Go and Let Good

It is foolish to think we can control everything. Sometimes when we've done all we can it's best to step back and allow things to take their course. Ultimately everything works out for the good because good is the only

power working in the universe. Our limited human minds don't always get to see the bigger picture, and that's OK. It's just the way it is.

> *God, give us the grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which can be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.*
>
> *Reinhold Niebuhr*

347 Faith

Faith is trust in an idea even when there's no *logical* proof. It is often believed to be misguided because it does not depend on sensory evidence.

However, faith has accomplished wonders and continues to do so. Without it, no one would ever take a risk or try anything original. To have faith that we can do something, even if there is no physical proof, empowers us to do it.

Faith is not just for esoteric types; Max Planck was one of many scientists who understand the value of faith. 'Anybody who has been seriously engaged in scientific work of any kind', he wrote, 'realises that over the entrance to the gates of the temple of science are written the words: *Ye must have faith.* It is a quality which the scientist cannot dispense with.'

Faith lies at the heart not only of science but also of spirituality. With faith, we allow ourselves to be guided by our intuition, do our best to lay down positive 'causes' each moment, and trust that the right effects will follow according to Universal Law.

> *There is no such thing as lack of faith. We all have plenty of faith, it's just that we have faith in the wrong things. We have faith in what can't be done rather than what can be done. We have faith in lack rather than abundance, but there is no lack of faith.*
>
> *Eric Butterworth*

348 Death

Death is the last taboo – nothing concentrates the mind on spiritual matters quite so much. We cannot have lasting peace of mind until we have come to terms with it.

Who has not at some time wondered what, if anything, happens after death? The truth is, we can never be sure. There is nothing certain even about death itself. Doctors know of no logical reason why a human body properly cared for should ever die. Perhaps one day we will discover how to regenerate our cells continually and live forever.

Our attitude to death impacts on our attitude to life. If we believe that death is final, why bother with ethical matters? Why not just get what we want and let someone else deal with the consequences?

But if we believe that life goes on beyond the grave and we have to answer for our actions either to a Higher Power or by coming back into human form and making amends, that puts an entirely different slant on the matter!

349 Death Is an Inevitable Aspect of Life

A woman whose young son had died was inconsolable. She visited all the doctors in the area to find out how the child's life could be restored. Finally she sought the help of the Buddha. She asked him to help bring her son back to life and ease the terrible pain in her heart.

The Buddha told her that he would revive her son if she could bring him a mustard seed from a household in which no one had ever died. The woman was elated and set out to find such a household. She visited one house after another, yet at every door received the same reply – at various times, members of the household had passed away. She returned to the Buddha in a more realistic frame of mind.

The Buddha had taught her that death is an inevitable fact of life. We are all going to die one day. What matters, like so many things, is not what happens, but our attitude towards it.

350 Life and Death Are Partners

We tend to see life as good and death as a bad thing, but this cannot be true. Life and death are complementary. They coexist. Death happens all the time while life continues.

Birth is the process by which a fragment of Creative Intelligence takes form as an individual being, but it is not the beginning. Neither is conception. We start out as *ideas* in the quantum energy field even before we become particles and long before we are born into the world. Hence birth is part of the transition from invisible substance into visible form.

Death is the transition back to the energy field. The Life Force leaves the body and is reabsorbed, mental activity ceases and the body disintegrates and returns to dust. Hence life and death are not *opposites* but *partners* in the great scheme of things.

> *Birth and death are of equal significance. They should concern you no more than going to sleep every night and waking up every morning. As you go to sleep, you die. As you wake up, you are born.*
>
> *Ramala*

351 Does the Personality Survive Death?

Some believe that the personality lives on after the Life Force has left the body. Dying, they say, is like taking off a cloak; we just step out of it like a snake sheds its skin.

In a famous letter written in 1854, the Native American leader Chief Seattle was of this view:

> *When the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone . . . they will not be alone . . . At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land . . .*
>
> *The dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.*

People who have had near-death experiences often report going through a tunnel and emerging into light to be greeted by friends and relatives who have already made the transition. Most say they found such joy and peace there that they didn't want to come back. Is this proof that the personality lives on after death? Not really. Neuroscientists argue that near-death experiences can be explained by the death throes of the brain and can be reproduced under hypnosis or hallucinogenic drugs.

Spirit cannot die; it is merely reabsorbed in CI. Why, then, fear death?

352 Reincarnation

People who believe in reincarnation think that after a period of reflection we are reborn into new bodies to continue our spiritual growth. Reincarnation, they say, explains childhood prodigies such as W. A. Mozart and occurrences of 'déjà vu'. Have child geniuses been here before and brought their previous learning with them? And is it possible that 'déjà vu' is really a memory from a previous life?

Again, we can't be sure, so it's best to keep an open mind. Life is a continuing experience of growth. We take on challenges as a way of moving up to the next level of consciousness. Who's to say the process doesn't continue over several lifetimes? The case continues, but is it worth dwelling on? Is all that mental energy well spent? Probably not. The important thing is not what you did in previous lives, but what you are and do *now*, in this.

353 Karma

Karma means 'cause and effect'. As we have seen, our words and actions have repercussions, and in the wider scheme of things, justice is always done. We reap what we sow.

The doctrine of Karma is often spuriously linked to reincarnation. Some say the effects of our actions are carried from one lifetime to another. We come back to correct our mistakes and experience what we put others through in previous lives. Eventually we learn our lessons – and then what?

Karma is not a punishment, but our greatest teacher. Whether it continues over several lifetimes is debatable, but we do know that we reap what we sow in *this* lifetime. Once we understand this, we can dedicate ourselves to growing in awareness and live from an ever-increasing perspective of service and love.

Peace Song

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With love as our power, family all are we
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now
With every step I take let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Adapted from 'Let There be Peace on Earth' by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson

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The Breakthrough

23 Get into the light

There is a Power that will light your way to health, happiness, peace and success, if you will but turn toward that light.

Paramahansa Yogananda

Light is often used as a metaphor for the holy or sacred, and this is more than an abstract idea. In many ways Creative Intelligence is like the sun, constantly emitting energy and keeping us alive. It flows through us and is as real as we are.

We can light up ourselves and the world around us by making a simple choice. As the Indian Master, Sai Baba, says, 'The rays of the Sun fall equally on all who are directed in their way. If someone is behind an obstacle, or in a room, he will receive only part of the light. Cultivating the higher spiritual yearnings is like coming out from the confinement of a room into the Sun's rays.'

Just as a place cannot be light and dark at the same time, when we are switched on, painful emotions such as doubt, hatred, anger and blame are eliminated, allowing love, courage, confidence and forgiveness to take their place and our spiritual power to flourish.

Many people are leaving the traditional religions because they cannot relate to dogma and ritual that bear little relation to living well and creating a better world. As you have discovered, spirituality is not concerned with theologies. It is about life and how to get the most out of it. Look inside, remove the mental blockages and let CI flow through you. Then use it to build the kind of world you want for yourself – one filled with peace, happiness, health and prosperity for all.

354 Where Should We Look For the Secret of Life?

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T. S. Elliot

Long ago, four senior gods met to decide where to hide the great secret of life. They knew they needed a safe place because if humans ever found it they couldn't be trusted to use it constructively.

The first god suggested hiding it at the top of a high mountain, but they soon realised that humans would eventually climb to the top and find it.

The second suggested that the bottom of the deepest ocean would be better, but agreed with the others that humans would eventually explore the depths and discover it.

The third suggested the centre of the Earth, but they realised that humans would one day dig deep enough to find it.

Finally, the wisest god spoke. 'There's only one place to hide the great secret of the universe – within the human heart. They'll never think of looking for it there.'

355 There Is Only One Power In the Universe

There is only one Power working in the universe – Creative Intelligence – and you are part of it. It flows through you and wants only good. You may not have been aware of this Power before, but it is there, just as it always was. Look deeper: it may be buried under a mountain of negative thinking, false beliefs and emotional baggage.

Everything you need to build a happy and fulfilling life and become a force for good in the world already lies within you. You are charged with spiritual energy. It needs only to be released, and as long as you have the ability to think and act for yourself, you can do it. It's never too late.

356 Your Inner Power Is Non-Physical, i.e. Spiritual

Your inner power has nothing to do with your physical attributes. If it were, the world would be ruled by giant wrestlers and Olympic weightlifters. Elderly, impaired or diminutive individuals such as Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Mahatma Gandhi, Stephen Hawking, St Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa would have made little impact.

Your inner power is spiritual. It reveals itself in your thoughts and beliefs, ideas, dreams, hopes, feelings and understandings. These shape your world, because your life is a reflection of whatever you hold in your mind. When they are attuned to Creative Intelligence, your thoughts, words and actions have real power. Take charge of your inner world and you take charge of your outer world too.

357 Make Full Use of Your Mind

Your spiritual power is not located in the conscious or unconscious mind, but in the Superconscious, the part of the mind which works through intuition, insight and inspiration. The Superconscious has the ability to stand back, observe and detach itself from the petty thoughts and emotions that dominate the untrained mind (ego).

To empower your Superconscious, take charge of your thinking. Apply the Law of Attraction. Focus on causes, not effects. Dispute limiting beliefs. Deny falsehood and affirm the good and the true. Pray without ceasing and meditate often. Have faith in your intuition. Then the Superconscious will play a bigger role in your life and strengthen your connection to the greatest mind of all: Creative Intelligence.

358 Attune Yourself To Creative Intelligence . . .

Creative Intelligence is the invisible energy that governs the universe, the Life Force which suffuses everything and connects us to each other. Mahatma Gandhi described it like this: 'Whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that changes a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates.' Be quiet and still, then you can feel CI pulsating in every part of your being.

A student once asked the teacher, 'How can I find God?' The teacher answered, 'How does a fish find the ocean?' You are living in an ocean of consciousness. It is around you and in every atom of your body. Love, peace and happiness are not to be found in faraway places or unusual states of consciousness, but here, right now, when you look within.

359 . . . By Taking Some Quiet Time For Yourself Each Day

Have some quiet time to yourself each day. Make it a priority. Pray whenever you feel the need. Pray for help in letting go of negative energy and raising your personal vibrations. Ask for spiritual ideas and the strength to put them into action. Meditate daily on your spiritual power and on the *Source* of your spiritual power.

When you commune frequently with your spiritual power in silence, stillness and solitude, your Higher Self assumes a progressively greater role in your life. You realise that, from a spiritual point of view, the best thing that could happen to you is happening right now. Guided by your intuition, you look for the lessons in every situation. You don't *expect* miracles to happen; but equally, you're not surprised if they do.

360 Let the Power Guide and Support You

Life is willing to take care of you, and so it does *when you allow it*. Get into rapport with Source energy and remind yourself that you are never alone. Minimise the influence of the ego and intellect: the intellect loves finding reasons to block spiritual progress, and the ego, especially a well defended ego, *always* gets in the way.

When CI is flowing freely you have access to all the wisdom and strength you need.

361 Be an Inspiration To Others . . .

As your spiritual power grows, people occasionally comment, 'I want what you have. Can you show me how to get it?' This shows they've reached a point in their lives where they are seeking truth. Tell them what you have learned. Share your experiences in a spirit of love, with humility. Explain to them that they already have what they seek and encourage them to develop a quiet, calm mind. Then they will discover it for themselves.

362 . . . But 'Cast Not Your Pearls Before Swine'

However, don't be tempted to impose your new awareness on people who have shown no interest. They're not yet ready. They won't understand and may even resent you. Don't waste your time and risk alienation trying to win them over.

Besides, ask yourself why it is so important to you to persuade others. Is it your ego's need to make you right and them wrong? Or are you attempting to run away from your own problems by preaching?

363 Raise Your Sights To a Higher Way of Being

One of the visitor attractions in the seaside town where I live is a balloon tethered to a 500 metre cable. Patrons enjoy a stunning panorama which extends for over twenty miles on a clear day. Imagine a balloon flight: the higher you rise, the further you see. Features on the ground, including all

the things you fret and worry over, get smaller and lose their detail. If the balloon could rise even higher, they would disappear completely.

Similarly, when you seek happiness and security in a higher way of thinking, your anxieties seem less significant. How do you attain a higher way of thinking? You know how. The way is represented by the letters I-T-I-A.

- *Intention*. Aspire to your highest potential. Direct your will. Keep your intentions pure and everything is achievable, and the more you stay focused, the more certain it is.
- *Think*. Shake off the thinking patterns that have constrained you, raise your thoughts to the underlying Intelligence that governs all our lives and affirm it as your Source.
- *Imagine*. Imagine yourself charged with spiritual energy, like a giant rechargeable battery absorbing power from the Source as effortlessly as breathing. Imagine yourself putting it to good use in the service of your fellow beings.
- *Action*. Be the master of your actions, making wise choices guided by your intuition. Act as if Source energy is flowing through you and have faith in all that is good. When this becomes your natural way of being, your Inner Power is truly awakened.

364 Persevere

When you decide to change, you'll come up against mental inertia – warring thoughts in your mind. Ignore them. There will probably be times when you're faced with a difficult decision: to keep faith with your new spiritual values or go back to your old ways.

A friend recently said to me, 'Yours are lovely values to have, but you can't live that way.' Why not? Did she mean that spiritual ideals somehow

interfere with other priorities, such as the scramble for status and material success? Greed, envy and selfishness are all too common in today's world: you don't have to be a part of it. Sure, it's challenging to choose a new way, but in matters of Spirit the rewards far outweigh the costs.

365 You Will Be Happy and Fulfilled and Have the Courage To Follow Your Dreams

No words can express how you feel once you have awakened the infinite power of Spirit within and experienced the freedom it brings. All along your Inner Power had been lying dormant, and you didn't realise it. But now you do. To quote Kahlil Gibran, 'You are greater than you know, and all is well.'

Whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be; and whatever your labours and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace within your soul.

From 'Desiderata'
Max Ehrman

A selection of inspiring further reading

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365 Steps to Self-Confidence

A programme for personal transformation in just a few minutes a day

David Lawrence Preston

Confidence is crucial to a happy and fulfilling life. It influences your success at work, your family life, relationships and leisure activities. It affects your performance in everything you do. A belief in one's self is without doubt the greatest asset of all. This book has been carefully structured to help you to achieve this crucial self-belief. It takes you deep inside your mind and gives you tools and techniques which have worked for millions of people around the world. All you have to do is work through and apply its lessons.

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A programme for personal and professional growth for just a few minutes a day

David Lawrence Preston

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ISBN 978-1-84528-058-1

Learning to Counsel

Develop the skills you need to counsel others

Jan Sutton and William Stewart

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'An inexpensive individual study resource which is aimed particularly at those studying to be counsellors.' – *Care and Health Magazine*

'A counsellor's pocketbook and a useful companion to students on courses up to counselling skills certificate level.' – *Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal*

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Understanding self-injury and self-harm and healing the emotional wounds

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Taming the Black Dog

Patrick Ellverton

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ISBN 978-1-85703-999-3

Everyday Witchcraft: Magic and Spells to Enchant a Modern Woman's Life

Kirsten Riddle

Magic is everywhere. Yes, it is about Witches and Witchcraft but we're not talking the evil warty nosed hags of fairytales. Witchcraft is the craft of the wise. It is a way to unleash and tap into the natural power that exists to bring about positive change.

Everyday Witchcraft is a practical comprehensive guide book of enchantment for the modern woman! A 'how to bring Magic into your life' book comprising of easy spells and simple instruction on inviting magic into your world on a daily basis. Kirsten Riddle wants to show how it can be used to improve all areas of life and increase self esteem. Most importantly she wants to show how simple witchcraft is and how we can use everyday ingredients, things that anybody would have in their cupboards or gardens to bring about positive change.

It is a fun and enjoyable read, touching on such subjects as how to get in touch with your inner goddess, how to enhance your love life, how to create the future you want, types of spells and recipes for success.

The book is split into easy to read sections covering spells for every area of life, including helpful tips to create a magical environment . Topics covered include:-

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- Love Spells (finding it, keeping it and getting rid of unwanted attention)
- Magical Names – the power of words and how to use them.
- Power Guides – getting in touch with your spiritual helpers.
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This book is an essential read for every woman. It's a manual packed with simple ideas for bringing magic into your life.

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